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ABSTRACT

A 4-year longitudinal study assessed the longer-term outcomes for students of Women Onto Work (WOW) courses aimed at unemployed Scottish women from Wester Hailes, Craigmillar, and Pilton/Muirhouse and unemployed women with disabilities from minority ethnic groups from Edinburgh (Scotland). The research covered 4-year groups of students who were in WOW between 1990 and 1994. Two groups were contacted 1 year after their WOW course and the other two groups were contacted approximately 1-2 years after the course. All students were sent a postal questionnaire; a one-in-five sample was interviewed. The average response rate was 67 percent (n=114 women); 25 women were interviewed. Results indicated that approximately 1 year after their WOW course, 30% of former students were in paid employment, mainly part time; 31% were in education or training. Forty-five percent were in paid employment at the 2-year stage, and 19% were in education or training. Eighty-four percent of students were positive about the value of their WOW course to them one year later, with 90% of students positive at the 2-year stage. For most, the fundamental benefit of WOW was that it helped to raise their confidence and self-esteem. It had also helped by providing specific information about educational and job opportunities, practical job-seeking skills, and work placement. (Six case studies and two follow-up questionnaires are appended.) (YLB)

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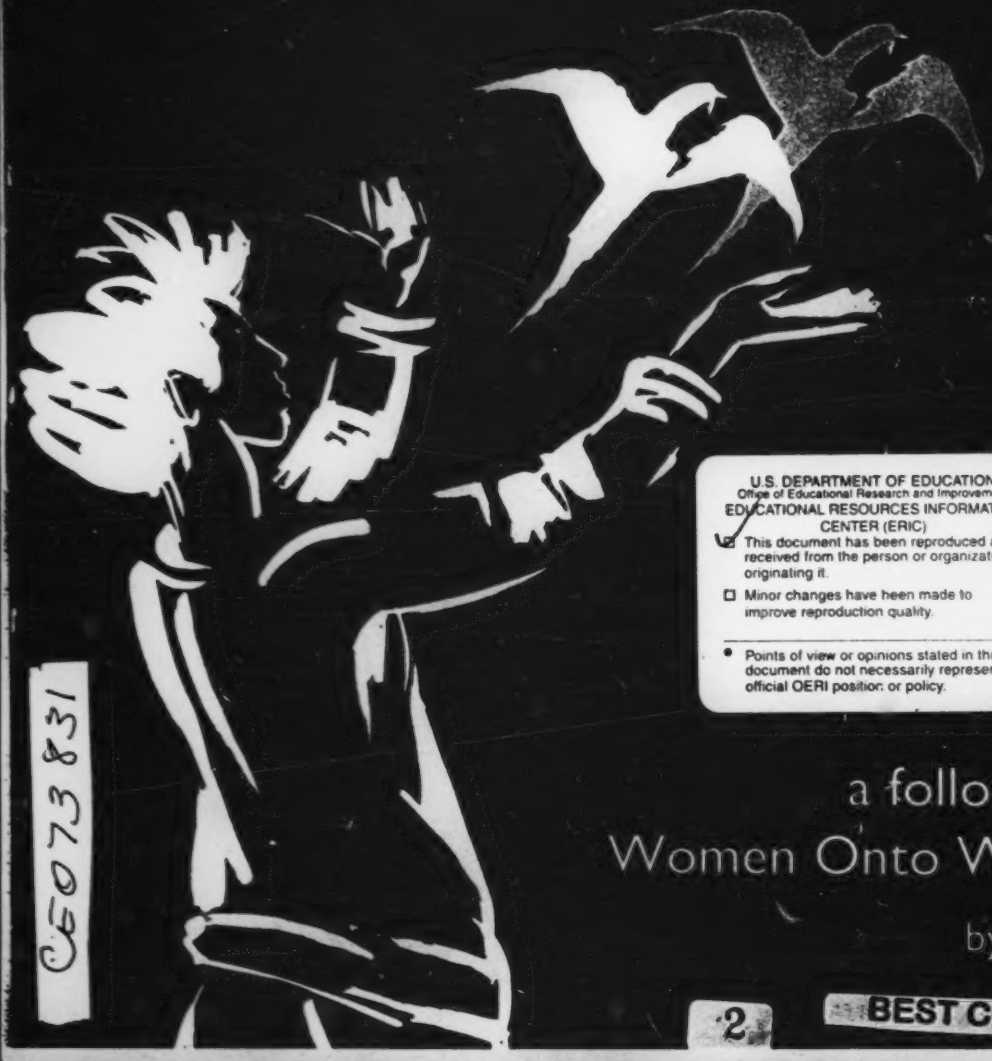
Making a move

Next Steps for Women



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a follow-up study of Women Onto Work students

by Cathy Howieson

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Making a *move*

Next Steps For Women

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Summary

Chapter 1: Introduction

Women Onto Work courses

Women Onto Work (WOW) courses are aimed at unemployed women from Wester Hailes, Craigmillar, Pilton/Muirhouse and unemployed women with disabilities and from minority ethnic groups from all parts of Edinburgh.

WOW recruits women with few formal qualifications and who have little or no work experience. The courses aim to raise participants' self-esteem, allow them to explore their options and prepare them for work or further education or training. The courses generally last for 12 weeks and include a work placement during the second half of the course. Childcare provision is made onsite or via an allowance.

The research

The Centre for Educational Sociology was commissioned to carry out a four year longitudinal study of WOW students to assess their longer-term outcomes. This is the final report of the research.

The research covers four year groups of students who were on WOW between 1990 and 1994. Two groups were contacted one year after their WOW course and the other two groups were followed up at approximately one and two years after their WOW course finished. All students were sent a postal questionnaire and a one-in-five sample interviewed.

The average response rate to the questionnaire sent one year after WOW to all four cohorts was 67%, a total of 114 women. Non-respondents were more likely to be unqualified but non-response did not seem to be related to women's post-course activities.

25 women were interviewed, selected on the basis of their current activity and whether or not they had been able to carry out their post-WOW plans. Throughout, it was difficult to arrange interviews with women at home, who are therefore under-represented in the interviews. The questionnaires, however, provide information about women in this category.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 report the questionnaire data; chapter 5 considers the themes and issues arising from both the questionnaires and interviews, and chapter 6 presents the conclusions of the study.

Chapter 2: WOW Students in Context

Most women were in the 25-44 age group when they were on their WOW course. They were evenly divided between those who were single and those with partners. Most had had a job in the past. Women's pre-WOW qualifications varied but well over a third did not have any formal qualifications, a considerably higher figure than the national average.

Over three-quarters of WOW students had children under 16, a much higher proportion than among women of working age nationally. WOW students were also much more likely to be lone parents compared with national figures.

The characteristics of WOW students varied somewhat across the local and city-wide courses but there were no clear differences in students over the four cohorts between 1990-1994.

WOW students were more likely to see education and training than employment as their immediate post-WOW goal. This did vary a little across the local and city-wide courses.

Chapter 3: WOW Students One Year On

Activities after one year

Approximately a year after their WOW course, under a third of former students were in paid employment, mainly part-time. They were working in care, catering, sales, education and cleaning. Overall, two-fifths had been in a paid job at some point since their WOW course.

A third of former students were in education or training at the one year point after WOW; they were split evenly between full- and part-time courses. Altogether, well over a half had had experience of education or training since finishing WOW of whom two-thirds had gained a formal qualification.

A fifth of former students were looking after their family or home; a tenth were unemployed and around the same proportion unable to work. About a half of former students were also involved in additional activities.

Former students' activities a year after WOW appear to be influenced by a number of factors: their prior qualifications; whether they were single or with a partner; and whether they had been able to find suitable childcare provision.

Opinions and plans

The overwhelming majority of students were positive about the value of their WOW course to them a year afterwards. All parts of the course were judged positively, especially assertiveness training, decision-making and work experience.

Well over a half of former students responded that they had been able to carry out the plans made at the end of their WOW course. Others had had to review and revise their plans. The main reason women had been unable to go ahead with their plans centred on their childcare responsibilities and lack of suitable provision. Lack of family support and limited job opportunities were other factors.

A year after WOW, most felt that they were at an early stage of pursuing their plans and a considerable proportion recognised that they would have to acquire further qualifications and training. The need for their plans to fit in with childcare responsibilities was a frequent comment.

Chapter 4: WOW Students Two Years On

Activities after two years

Two groups of students were surveyed a second time, two years after their WOW course had finished. A higher proportion were in paid employment at the two year stage than after one year and fewer were in education or training. Under a half were in paid work, mainly part-time while under a fifth were in education or training, mostly on a full-time basis. Women were working in largely the same employment sectors at the one and two year stages after WOW: care, clerical, catering, sales, and education.

Two thirds of former students had been, or were, in education or training in the two years since their WOW course. This compares with over a half who had done so at the one year point. Two-thirds of those who had started a course after WOW had gained a qualification by the two year point.

Two years after WOW, a fifth of former participants were looking after their family or home and 15% were unable to work because of illness or disability.

Between one and two years after WOW, just under a half of former students had changed to a different activity (eg moved from education to paid employment). Most of those who moved into a different activity made what would seem to be a positive change.

After WOW, the majority of participants did not enter a permanent or relatively long-term activity. This suggests that short-term destination analysis of course participants is only of limited value.

Opinions and plans

Two years after WOW, former participants were frequently still at an early or interim stage of their plans so it is not possible to make a final judgement of the success of WOW in improving students' employment position. But, considering the employment data and the subsequent education and training undertaken by students, WOW had raised students' job aspirations and helped some into employment. The majority of women, however, had experienced difficulties in carrying out their post-WOW plans due to domestic responsibilities, health problems, finance and unsuitable hours.

Around two-thirds of former students' future plans concerned employment, either finding a job or getting a better one, but education and training was still seen as important, mentioned by three-fifths of women.

Two years after WOW, former students were still very positive about the benefit of their course to them, in particular, its value in building their confidence and helping them decide what they wanted to do.

Chapter 5: Themes and Issues

The value of WOW

Former students were positive about the value of WOW to them, most of those interviewed perceived it as useful and successful and the course had had a significant effect on a substantial proportion of them.

For most participants, the most fundamental benefit of WOW was that it helped to raise their confidence and self-esteem, in particular, by its focus on them as individuals. WOW had proved a starting-point for many, giving them "the push" they needed.

WOW had also helped women get started by providing specific information and help about educational and job opportunities, practical job-seeking skills and through the work placement.

Work placements were highly valued by participants and had been a key factor in some women's decision to go on WOW. Placements were useful in testing out career interests, in giving women new ideas and in putting them in touch with potential employers.

Selection for WOW

Women's pre-WOW qualifications, their marital status and the availability of affordable childcare post-WOW each had an effect on former participants' ability to benefit from WOW. But the interviews show that other, less obvious factors, had an influence on women's post-WOW outcomes.

Difficulties with childcare did influence many women's plans but their ability to overcome childcare problems depended on a variety of factors unique to each of them. It is not possible, therefore, to be definitive about the likely effect of children on a women's chances of success after WOW.

The clarity of women's plans at the end of their WOW course did not have much bearing on their later activities. Some needed more time to make up their minds and other's decisions were influenced by subsequent events and opportunities. WOW helped to create some of the opportunities and, by building up women's confidence, enabled them to respond when a chance arose.

Childcare and families

For women with dependent children, their decisions about employment, hours of work, whether to study full-time or part-time, and their choice of course were all affected by their childcare responsibilities. The majority of women with young children had experienced problems with their childcare.

Although the attitude of partners and family was not identified by many women as a difficulty in carrying out their post-WOW plans, only a few of those interviewed had received active support and encouragement from partners.

Education and training

Most of those interviewed had been in education or training since their WOW course. WOW had been a positive learning experience and had given them the confidence to undertake further education. They had done so mainly for job-related reasons but also for personal development. But some women had not been able to go to college because of lack of childcare and others had had to study part-time rather than full-time.

Most of the women were positive about the subsequent course they had undertaken. Several did comment, however, on the different teaching style compared with their WOW course. A number had also found difficulty in coping with different aspects of their course work and wanted more help from college staff about this. Several who had

embarked on a full-time course had found their college unsympathetic to their childcare responsibilities.

Finance

The financial position of those in education and training varied. Much depended on individual circumstances but different colleges' use of Access funds also had an effect. The loss of students' right to Housing Benefit was a specific problem.

The financial implications of further study are complicated, especially for mature students such as WOW participants. But it was evident from the interviews that most did not have enough information about financial matters. Students on WOW courses, considering further study, need to be alerted to the value of discussing their financial matters with appropriate advisers.

Finance was also an issue for some women with disabilities when considering their job plans. A particular problem was the possibility of permanent loss of benefits if a woman started paid work but found she was unable to continue working.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Most women who had taken part in WOW between 1990 and 1994 were very positive about the value of their course. Post-course employment figures, and, especially participation rates in education and training, are also positive; these are still only interim figures. WOW has also achieved a great deal in raising participants' self-esteem and ambitions. It should be remembered that these outcomes have been achieved with participants who were disadvantaged in a number of respects.

The success of any course depends on suitable recruitment but it is not easy to predict who will gain most from WOW. The one category of women likely to gain least are those who really need vocationally specific training or to find employment.

Former WOW students' plans were usually long term in nature and they needed access to on-going, impartial guidance after WOW. Although WOW can make sure participants are aware of all possible post-course sources of advice, a comprehensive adult guidance system is required to meet women's needs.

Childcare responsibilities had a major impact on women's plans and activities. More extensive and affordable childcare is required but also a change of attitude among some employers and education and training providers.

Women encountered a range of reactions to their participation in WOW and to their subsequent plans. As WOW students re-assess themselves and their lives, this will have an impact on partners and families and is an issue that needs to be discussed within courses.

WOW is very successful in motivating participants to enter formal education but could do even more to prepare them for subsequent education and training, including help with study skills, and more direct contact via speakers, visits and educational placements.

Mainstream education and training is very important for WOW participants but the transition to it can be difficult because of lack of childcare, the teaching and learning methodologies used and limited study skill support. The experience of some WOW

participants in this respect mirrors that reported in other studies. Change is needed in other parts of the education system if women are to fulfil ambitions raised by courses such as WOW.

WOW has been successful in helping many participants "get started" but other developments are necessary including improvements in childcare, employment practice, guidance provision, education and training and student finance.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Women Onto Work

This is the final report of a longitudinal study of students who took part in Women Onto Work courses between 1990 and 1994. Women Onto Work courses are aimed at unemployed women from Wester Hailes, Craigmillar and Pilton/Muirhouse and at unemployed women with disabilities and women from minority ethnic groups from all parts of Edinburgh.

The aim of WOW is to recruit women with few formal educational qualifications and who have either had little work experience or who have previously worked in low paid, unskilled jobs. This background means that the only option for most is low paid, low level employment. A fundamental aim, therefore, of the WOW courses is to raise participants' self-esteem and therefore their aspirations. Formally, the stated aims of WOW are to:

- allow women to examine their opinions, attitudes and experiences with an eventual emphasis on employment;
- allow women to choose, or go some way towards choosing, the area of employment and/or relevant training they might like to go into.

The courses generally run for three days a week over a 12 week period in the autumn and spring. They include self-assessment, confidence building, examining options and opportunities in work and education, careers counselling and developing job seeking skills. Work experience is a major element of the course; women spend two days each week on placement during the second half of the course. The courses emphasise an informal, participative and active learning methodology. A vital aspect is the provision of childcare either onsite or via allowances for participants. English language support is offered if necessary.

The courses are funded through Urban Aid and the European Social Fund under the sponsorship of the City of Edinburgh Council. A legally independent city-wide Board of Management (Women Onto Work Ltd) manages the project which is administered by a city-wide office. Each of the courses is delivered by a Co-ordinator and managed by a Local Steering Group.

The research

An evaluation of a series of pilot WOW courses found that at the end of their course, participants felt they had developed a great deal in terms of self-awareness and confidence, had learned about available options in education and training and had also gained practical job seeking skills (We've Got Options, Women and Work Evaluation Report, 1991). But the crucial issue is the impact of WOW on women's educational and employment

prospects in the longer term. It was decided, therefore, to carry out a longitudinal study over a four year period, 1992-1996.

The women involved

The research deals with four year groups or cohorts of students:

A cohort:	on WOW courses run in autumn 1990 and spring 1991
B cohort:	on WOW courses run in spring 1992
C cohort:	on WOW courses run in autumn 1992 and spring 1993
D cohort:	on WOW courses run in autumn 1993 and spring 1994

The original intention was to contact all former participants at approximately one year and then two years after their WOW course had ended. At each annual contact all participants would be surveyed and a one-in-five sample of respondents interviewed. Funding difficulties led to some changes in the original design of the research and the study eventually involved:

A cohort:	all former participants surveyed by postal questionnaire and a one-in-five sample interviewed one year and two years after WOW
B cohort:	all former participants surveyed by postal questionnaire and a one-in-five sample interviewed one year after WOW
C cohort:	all former participants sent a brief up-date sheet one year after WOW
	all former participants surveyed by postal questionnaire and a one-in-five sample interviewed two years after WOW
D cohort:	all former participants surveyed by postal questionnaire and a one-in-five sample interviewed one year after WOW.

Given the timing of the WOW courses, what is referred to for simplicity as "one year after WOW" is between 10 and 15 months depending on whether the WOW course was held in autumn or spring. Similarly "two years after WOW" refers to a period between 22 and 27 months afterwards.

Questionnaires

The postal questionnaire included questions on former participants current activities; any employment, education or training they had undertaken since finishing their WOW courses; their present childcare requirements; and some personal information. It also covered women's views on their WOW course, whether they thought it had been useful to them since they left; if they had been able to pursue the plans they had made at the end of their course and, if not, the reasons for this. Copies of the questionnaires are presented in Appendix 2.

The average response rate to the questionnaire sent after one year to all four cohorts was 67%, giving a total of 114 women. The response rate of the two cohorts contacted, again, two years after WOW, was 53%. This is not particularly unexpected since there is usually a decline in the response rate at each contact point in a postal survey. Non-respondents were more likely to be unqualified, but non-response did not appear to be related to women's post-course activities, for example, those who were at home full time were just as likely to return their questionnaires as those in work or education.

Interviews

The interviews explored the topics covered in the questionnaire further and, in particular, provided the opportunity to gain some insights into women's post-course experiences and the factors that influenced their decisions and activities. They typically lasted 1 to 2 hours. A total of twenty-five women from the four WOW year groups were interviewed: 15 were interviewed one year after their WOW course and the other 10 two years later.

The 25 women were selected for interview on the basis of two criteria: their current activity and whether or not they felt they had been able to carry out the plans made at the end of their WOW course. Of the two, the most important was to try and interview women who covered the full range of post-WOW activities of each year group. Throughout the research, it proved difficult to find enough women at home who were willing to be interviewed. In the first two sets of interviews no-one who was then at home and not in paid employment or education and training agreed to be interviewed. It was only in the third and final set of interviews, that it was possible to arrange interviews with women who were at home. The interviews, therefore, do cover the full-range of students' post-WOW activities but those at home are under-represented to some extent. Of course, the questionnaires also provide information about women in this category.

It is impossible to say why a high proportion of those who were at home did not agree to be interviewed. It may be that these women felt that they had little to say or that they had "failed" in some way because they were not in a paid job or in education, even if this was a legitimate decision. The most important question is whether these women were at home by choice or because they had been prevented from entering education, training or employment. As is discussed later in the report, the questionnaire responses suggest that remaining at home was not a positive decision for some women.

Chapter 2

WOW Students in Context

This chapter describes the women who took part in WOW in its first four years from 1990-1994. It shows the extent to which participants fitted the WOW target group; provides the context from which to assess their subsequent activity; and outlines their post-WOW plans.

Personal profile

Well over half of students on the four WOW year groups were aged between 25-34 and a quarter were in the 35-44 age bracket when they were on WOW (57% and 26% respectively). Thus, over four-fifths were between 25 and 44 (Figure 1). They were fairly evenly divided in terms of marital status with just over a half having a partner and just under a half being single, divorced or widowed (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Age Group

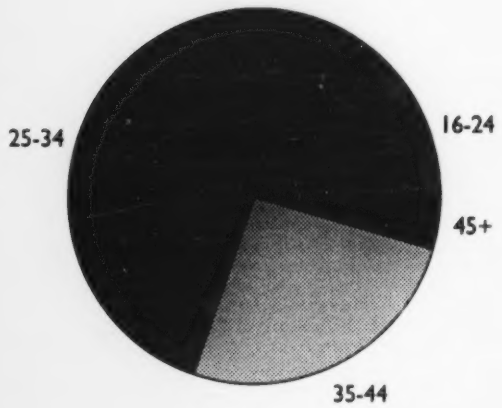
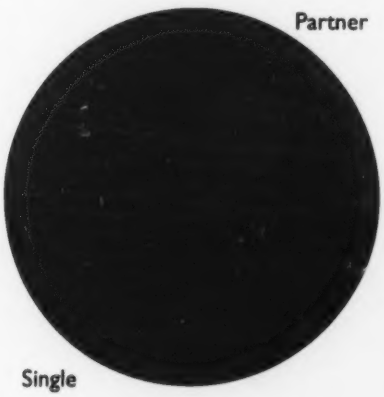
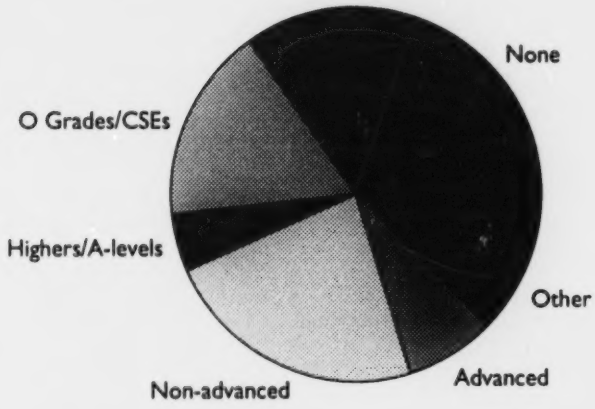


Figure 2: Marital Status



The large majority of WOW students, over four-fifths, had had a job in the past (81%). Women's pre-WOW qualifications varied, ranging from none to degree level, but the largest single group were those who did not have any formal qualifications (38%). Considering women's highest level of qualification, the largest single group were those with non-advanced qualifications such as RSA certificates or Scotvec National Certificate Modules (23%). They were followed by those with 'O' grades or CSEs (17%). Under a tenth held an advanced qualification such as a degree or HNC/HND (8%). Figure 3 summarises women's pre-WOW qualifications.

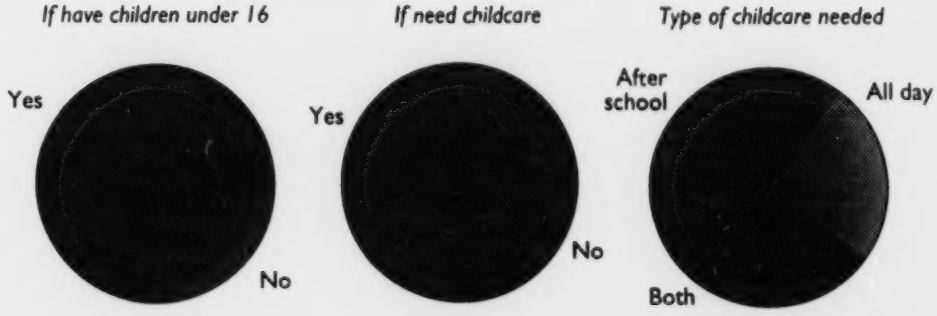
Figure 3: Qualifications gained pre-WOW



When they were on WOW, over three-quarters of students had children under 16 living at home (77%) (Figure 4) and around two-thirds of students required childcare provision (64%). Of those who needed childcare, a quarter stated that they wanted all day care, just over a third after-school care and two-fifths both all day and after school (25%, 35% and 40% respectively). The proportion of WOW students who had children under 16 is much higher than women of working age nationally (40% vs 77% of WOW students, Mothers in the Labour Market, Employment Gazette, Nov 1994). At the national level, 17% of mothers of working age were lone parents. This compares to 46% in the case of WOW students.

WOW courses are targeted at women with few formal educational qualifications: have courses managed to recruit from the target group? Nationally, most people of working age have some qualifications, only 22% have no formal qualifications (Spring 1994 Labour Force Survey). 45% are qualified to Higher/A Level or higher. Comparing these figures to the qualifications profile of WOW students, a higher proportion of WOW students have no qualifications (38% vs 22%) and fewer have higher level qualifications (36% vs 45%). So, compared against national figures, WOW seems to be achieving its target group.

Figure 4: Childcare



The low level of qualifications of WOW students underlines the importance of subsequent education and training for them. Women with higher levels of qualifications are more likely to be economically active (ie in the labour force) than those with lower qualifications or none. Encouraging WOW students to improve their qualifications is a vital step in helping them move back into the labour market. This is even more important because of the impact of qualifications on the economic activity rates of mothers with partners compared with lone mothers. Lone mothers are generally less well qualified than mothers with partners but, among women with qualifications, lone mothers are less likely to be economically active than other mothers with the equivalent level of qualification (Bartholomew, Hibbert and Sidaway in 'Lone Parents and the Labour Market', *Employment Gazette*, Nov 1992). This is a particularly relevant factor for WOW since a high proportion of participants are lone parents.

Variation across local courses

Overall, the first four year groups of WOW students were mainly in the 25-44 age range, most had been in paid employment at some time in the past. They were less qualified than most of the population of working age and also more likely to have dependent children and to be lone parents.

These overall characteristics of WOW students vary somewhat across the courses, for example, the Craigmillar based courses and the courses for Women with Disabilities had smaller proportions of women with partners, women on the Black Minority Ethnic courses were much more likely to have partners. On all of the courses, the large majority of students were in the 25-44 age range but there were some differences within this – the Black Minority Ethnic courses and those for Women with Disabilities had a higher proportion of older students. Students on the Black Minority Ethnic courses had a much smaller proportion of women who had previously had a paid job.

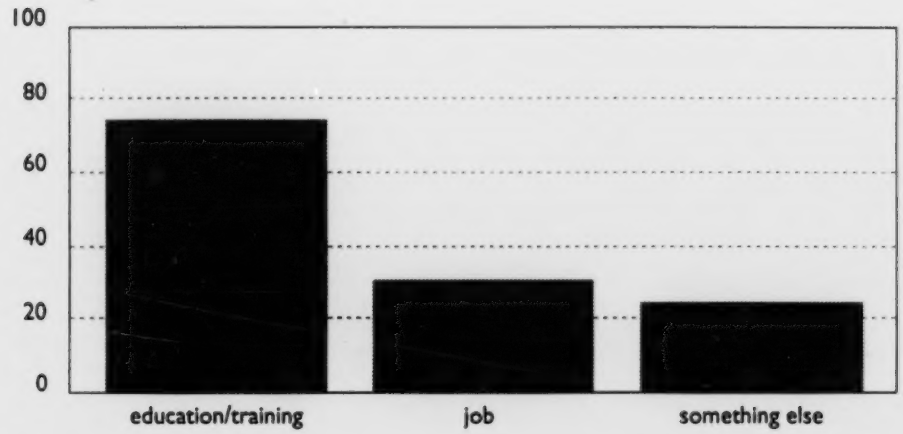
Qualification level also varied across the courses. A higher proportion of students on the Craigmillar based courses and Black Minority Ethnic courses had no formal qualifications than on the other courses while students on the Disabilities course were more likely to have higher level qualifications than students elsewhere.

Only a minority of students on the Disabilities course had children (16%), a very different situation from all the other courses. The Pilton and Craigmillar courses had the highest proportion of students with dependent children, over 90% in both cases. Need of childcare provision varied mainly in relation to Black Minority Ethnic courses where a smaller proportion of students (but still a majority) stated that they required provision.

Variation by year

The study deals with four cohorts of women who took part in WOW over the period 1990-94 (groups A, B, C and D). Did the characteristics of students on WOW courses change over this period? There were differences from year to year in relation to students' age and status but no obvious pattern is evident. A smaller proportion of D students (well under two-thirds) had been in paid employment before WOW compared to women on the other three courses but without data on subsequent courses, it is not possible to

Figure 5: Plans after WOW



say whether this is the start of a trend or a one-off "blip". Women on the D courses were also much more likely to have no formal qualifications than students on previous courses – around two-thirds were unqualified. There were no significant differences over this period in the proportion of women with dependent children and their need for childcare provision.

Plans after WOW

At the end of their course, students were asked about their immediate post-course plans – whether they were intending to apply for education or training, for a job or do something else. These were not exclusive categories and some women had more than one option in mind. Overall, three-quarters responded that they intended to apply for education or training; around a third planned to apply for a job and just over a fifth to do something else (Figure 5). In a number of cases this was voluntary work. The large majority, therefore, saw education and training as their immediate goal.

Students from the Craigmillar courses were a little more likely to be thinking about a job and a little less likely to say they were planning to apply for a course despite the fact that a higher proportion of students on the Craigmillar courses had no formal qualifications. A higher proportion of students on the Disabilities courses were planning to "do something else".

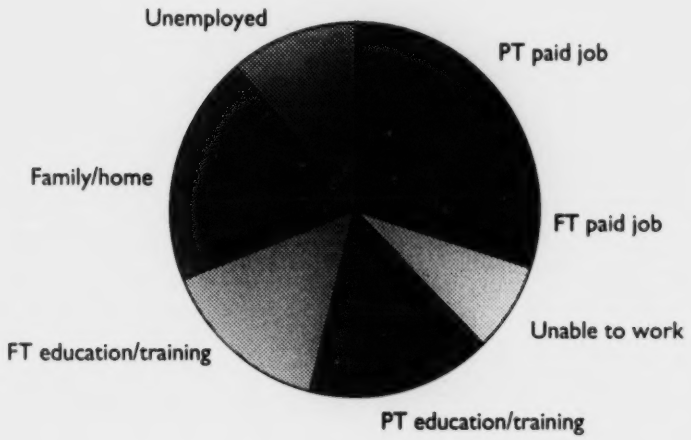
Chapter 3

WOW Students One Year On

Activities after one year

What was the position of WOW students a year or so after their course?[1] When they were surveyed approximately a year later, under a third were in paid employment, mainly part-time (30%, Figure 6). A similar proportion were in education or training, more or less evenly split between full-time and part-time study (15% and 16%). A fifth were looking after their family or home. Around a tenth were unemployed and just under a tenth were unable to work due to illness or disability (11% and 8%).

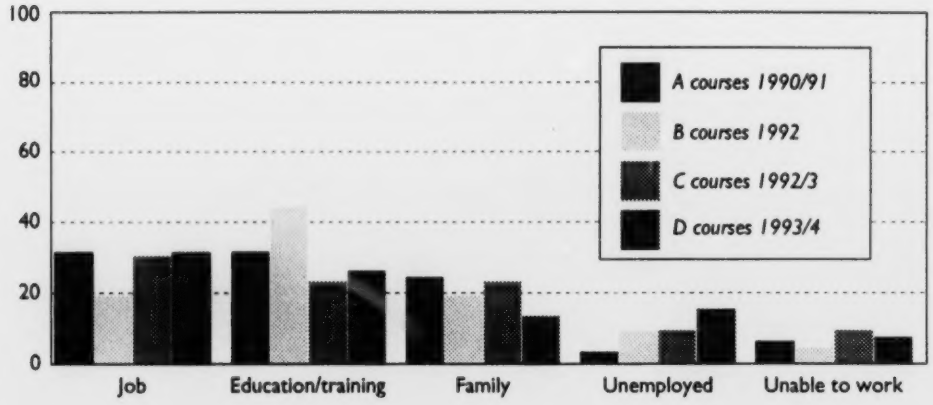
Figure 6: Main activity one year after WOW



The numbers involved in each of the year groups are relatively small so interpretation across the four courses between 1990 and 1994 has to be approached with some caution. But two main differences are evident (Figure 7). Across the four year groups, the proportion of former students in paid work was around a third with the exception of "B" students (1993) where only a fifth were working. A higher proportion of "B" students were in education or training than from the other three year groups.

[1] 10 months later for those on spring WOW courses and 15 months fot students on WOW courses run in the winter.

Figure 7: Main activity one year after WOW by year group



Reporting only on women's main activity does not give the full picture of their status and activities a year later. In the questionnaire, women could tick more than one category and around a half did so.[2] In some cases this was to indicate their responsibilities for their family and in the home as well as some other activity, so that a woman might tick both a "part-time job" and "looking after family or home". In other cases, it might be a combination of, for example, part-time job and part-time education; unemployed and voluntary work; or unable to work and part-time education.

Influence of age and marital stage

Women's age does not appear to be a relevant factor influencing their activity a year after their WOW course. But marital status does seem to be relevant. The main difference was that women who did not have a partner were less likely to be in paid employment and more likely to be in education or training, especially on a full-time basis. One might speculate that it is more difficult for women with partners to undertake full-time education because of the time and level of commitment required. Single women were also a little more likely to be looking after their home or family than those in a couple. The single most common activity for women with a partner was part-time employment.

Effect of prior qualifications

Whether or not women had formal qualifications prior to WOW was another factor that seems to have an influence on what they were doing a year later. In this analysis, the distinction is made simply between those who did not have any formal pre-WOW qualifications and those who did. The numbers involved are not sufficient to allow comparison between women with different levels of qualifications. A year later, those who had no formal attainments before they started their WOW course, were less likely to be in paid employment than those with some prior qualifications. The two groups had much the same likelihood of being in education or training but the unqualified had a higher chance of being at home with the family or of being unemployed.

[2] Respondents were asked to indicate their main activity but a substantial number did not do so. Therefore, where women ticked more than one status, their main activity was assigned on the basis of the following hierarchy: full-time job, full-time education, part-time job, part-time education, unemployed, unable to work, looking after family or home.

Impact of children and childcare needs

If one looks simply at whether or not women had dependent children under 16 a year after WOW, this does not make a great difference to what they were doing. It mainly seems to influence whether women state they were unemployed or looking after their family or home. Those without children were more likely to respond they were unemployed than those who had children. This may well reflect how some women define their position, that if they do not have a paid job and do not have children, they may be more inclined to define themselves as unemployed rather than looking after their family or home.

Other evidence shows that it is the age of children that is critical to mothers' economic activity but we do not have comprehensive data on this. Another approach is to consider women's childcare situation. Looking at whether or not former WOW students with children were able to find suitable childcare, it seems that this had more of an influence on their subsequent activity than the fact of having or not having children. Those unable to find childcare were, as might be expected, less likely to be working or studying full-time and more likely to be at home. It is reasonable to assume that those who stated that they had not been able to find suitable provision did, in fact, want childcare and so were being prevented from working or studying full-time because of this. This is confirmed by a subsequent question which asked directly whether lack of childcare prevented work or study. Overall, four-fifths of those who answered this question responded that it did, including the large majority of those at home looking after their family.

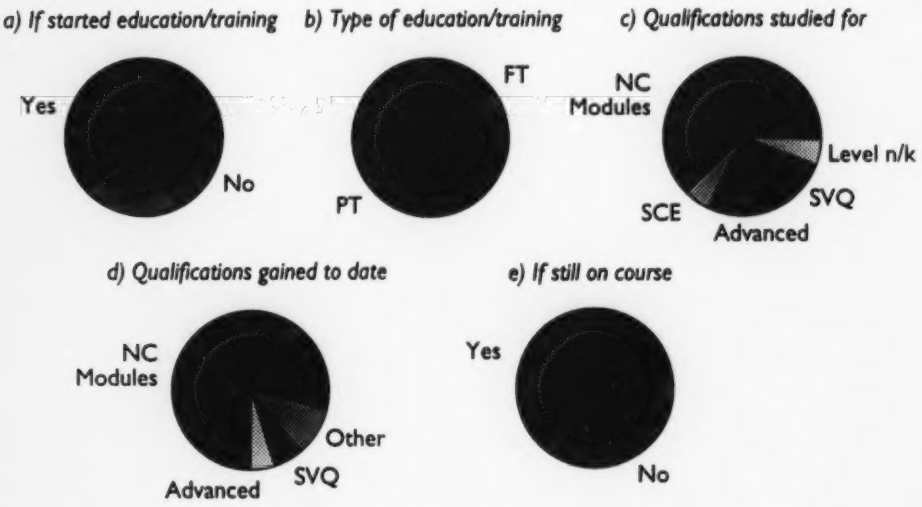
In summary, WOW students' activity a year after their course appears to be influenced by a number of factors: their prior qualifications; whether they were single or with a partner; and whether they had been able to find suitable childcare provision.

Courses and qualifications

Towards the end of their course, three-quarters of students stated that they intended to apply for education or training (some also gave other options). By a year later, well over a half had been, or were still in, some form of education or training (56%, Figure 8a). Of these women, just under two-thirds were studying part-time and over a third were full-time students (64% and 36%, Figure 8b). National Certificate Modules were by far the most common qualification studied for, over three-fifths of those taking a qualification were doing NC modules (Figure 8c). By this stage, around three-fifths of those in education or training had actually gained a qualification (61%, Figure 8d). Again, this was mainly in the form of NC modules. But this is only an interim figure since two-thirds of those who had started a course were still on it and could be expected to gain further qualifications (Figure 8e).

Comparing the year groups there was little change in the type of qualifications studied for, or gained. A smaller proportion of former students from the A and D year groups had started education and training by one year after WOW than from the B and C groups. However, women from the A and B courses who did enter education and training were more likely to do so on a full-time basis than those on the B and C courses.

Figure 8: Participation in education and training one year after WOW

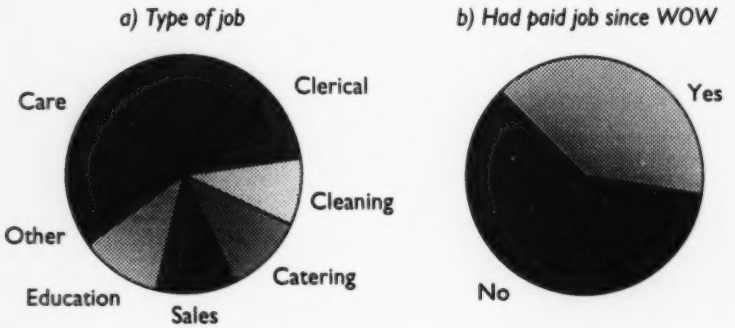


Comparing former students' participation in education and training one year after WOW across the different areas, women from the Disabilities course were least likely to have embarked on education and training since finishing their WOW course.

Employment

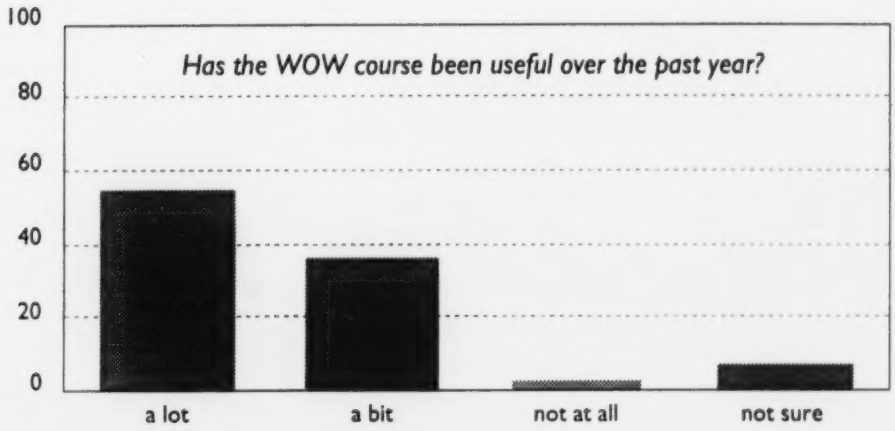
As noted above, when they were surveyed at approximately a year after WOW, under a third of former participants were in paid employment (30%), the majority part-time. They were employed in: care; clerical; catering; sales; education; and cleaning (Figure

Figure 9: Employment one year after WOW



9a). A higher proportion had had at least one paid job at some point in the year since finishing WOW (40%, Figure 9b). Over a quarter had had more than one job in this time (27%).

Figure 10: Opinion of WOW course one year later



Looking back on WOW

A year after their WOW course, the overwhelming majority of students from the first four years of WOW were positive about the value of their course to them. Well over a half felt that their course had been very useful (55%) and over a third rated it "a bit" useful (36%). Altogether around 90% expressed a positive opinion (Figure 10).

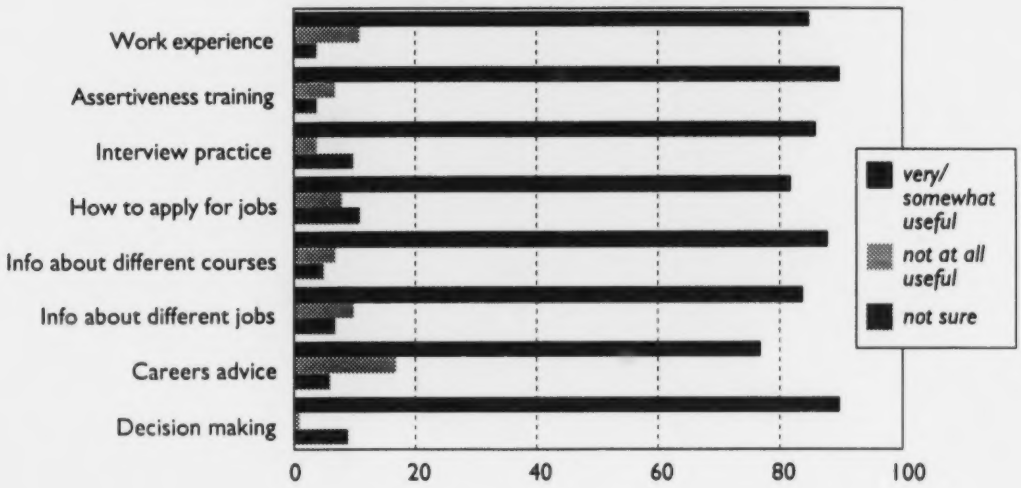
Students also rated the different elements of their course. All parts of the course were judged positively. Each part was thought to be "very useful" or "a bit useful" by three-quarters or more of the students (Figure 11). Assertiveness training, decision-making and work experience were seen as particularly useful. Women were able to write in comments and most commonly these concerned increased self-confidence and belief in themselves and their potential:

> *"I gained confidence and self-esteem and more faith in my own ability."*
>
> *"It gave me confidence to go to college and do my course."*
>
> *"I wouldn't have thought about working with computers before I started WOW. The course gave me a lot of self-worth and helped me realise I can do more than just cook and clean."*

A high proportion also felt that the information about courses that they had received had been useful subsequently. Careers advice received the lowest rating although it must be stressed that it was found useful by 77% of students. When these women were on their course, WOW did not have an Employment Guidance Counsellor on its staff and only received limited input from the local Careers Service. The post of Employment Guidance Counsellor for WOW was created in 1995 to provide a more comprehensive service for students.

Opinion of WOW did vary a little across the area based courses but it is the response from women from the Disabilities course that differed the most. More than a third were not sure whether their WOW course had been useful to them or not. This result is not particularly surprising. One of the issues concerning the courses for Women with Disabilities has been the relevance and suitability of the general aims of WOW. Given the target group for the Disabilities course, it is also not unreasonable that the participation

Figure 11: Opinion of different parts of WOW course one year later



of some women may well be more exploratory and their outcome more variable than on the other WOW courses. The subsequent introduction of a two day taster to assist with selection into the course for Women with Disabilities may help overcome some of these difficulties. Although a majority of students on the Disabilities course valued the various elements of their course, they were somewhat less positive than women elsewhere. They were more likely to rate the different parts of their course as "somewhat" rather than "very" useful, especially for the job-related aspects such as "how to apply for jobs" and "information about job opportunities". This is more likely to reflect their difficulties in the labour market rather than the quality of the provision.

There was no significant variation in students' opinion of WOW between the different year groups over the period 1990-1994.

Outcomes of plans

Overall, well over half of former WOW students felt that they had been able to carry out the plans they had made at the end of their course (58%).

There was no significant variation in the plans women made across the courses by area. The only difference across the year groups was that women from the A group were more likely to think that they had been able to follow up their plans than those on subsequent courses. However, the matter of whether or not women succeed in implementing the plans made at the end of their course is not entirely straightforward. In some cases where women stated that they were following their WOW plans, comparison with questionnaires completed at the end of their course showed that they were not actually doing so. This is likely to reflect the natural evolution and revision of plans as well as poor memory and a rationalisation of their present circumstances.

It would be unrealistic to expect most participants to come to definite plans and that some would not have to review and revise their plans in the light of their post-course circumstances. As one woman wrote:

"I do think more about myself and what I need [since WOW] but of course things don't always work out as planned. After WOW I became a supervisor at X but had to give this up for various reasons so now I work three part-time jobs."

Another woman's story shows how plans sometimes needed to be revised:

"The WOW course gave me the confidence to try for a course I did not think I was capable of doing... I was going to apply for a course at X College but my asthma was very bad and that made a large difference to my plans... that made me think about a job in an office or reception... so I applied to X [names Employment Training scheme]... I feel very confident that when I get my NVQ [National Vocational Qualification] I will be able to get myself a job that suits my health problem and incorporates my new found skills."

Family commitments, mainly childcare responsibilities, were the main reasons given by those women who felt they had not been able to carry out their plans. As noted above, nearly four-fifths of former students needed childcare:

"I am still no further ahead, I received a place at X college but no childcare was available."

"Because of children at home, I'm restricted to hours and finance."

"I am working part-time but would really like to go back to full-time employment but I have no one to look after my daughter school holidays/days off."

Even where women had gone ahead with their plans, lack of childcare could still be an issue:

"I started full-time education at X College. I am happy because I have a chance to go back for further education but at the same time I worry about my child when I am in college. I cannot find suitable childcare provision."

Several women's comments suggested that, a year later, they felt the plans they had made at the end of WOW had not been realistic:

"At the present time I feel my family are too young to fit in with what my plans were. No definite plans for the next few years."

It is impossible to judge whether this woman's plans were indeed unrealistic or now perceived to be so because they had not worked out in practice. It is also clear from both the questionnaires and the interviews that it is extremely difficult to pre-judge what will be feasible, especially in relation to a woman's childcare circumstances. This is discussed further in chapter five.

Lack of support or family pressure was another type of reason for not being able to carry out plans, this seemed to apply most to the "B" year group of WOW students:

"While doing WOW I had full support of husband, since doing college I no longer have that support."

A minority of women felt they had made little progress and were clearly depressed by their lack of success:

"I have tried to get part-time work but nobody wants to know... I don't seem to be getting anywhere, I've done two courses and I still can't get any further with my life."

and

"With yet another year of unemployment, I am deeper in debt... I just hope with another certificate [National Certificate in Social Care] I'll be able to get a job.

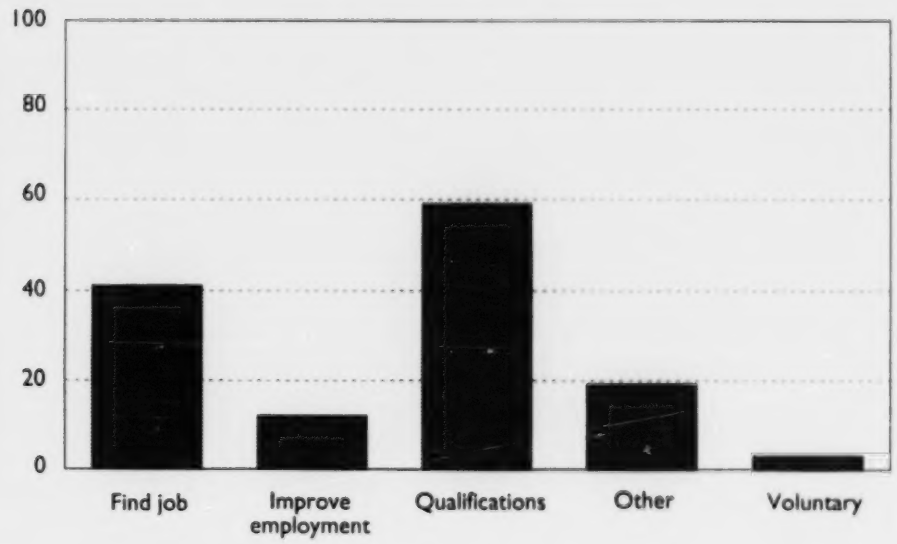
While WOW can help motivate women, build their confidence and encourage them to gain qualifications, it obviously cannot change the employment market.

Looking ahead

Women were asked about their plans for the next few years. About a third had more than one idea in mind. Gaining a qualification or further qualifications was the most frequently stated plan, 59% planned to do so (Figure 12). Around two-fifths were intending to find a job and just over a tenth hoped to improve their employment situation by getting a better job or becoming self-employed. Just under a fifth gave a variety of non-work and non-educational plans and a small proportion intended to undertake voluntary work (3%).

The most common theme emerging from women's responses is that for a considerable proportion, their plans were incremental in nature, taking into account family responsibilities and the need to acquire further qualifications or training. It is also clear that, a year after WOW, a majority felt that they were at an early stage of their plans. One student currently on a community education course wrote:

Figure 12: Plans for next few years



"Since doing WOW, the decisions I made about what I was going to do in order to work towards a career have slowly begun to take place. My son is 3 1/2 years and hopefully if things go well [on course] I'll be ready to get into work by the time he's at school."

The need for their plans to fit in with their childcare responsibilities was a frequent comment:

"...try and find a job, part-time at first and then full-time once my daughter is older. I like to be in the house when she comes home."

Health issues made planning difficult for a number of women:

"...depends a lot on my health, would like to continue at college."

A small minority had no clear idea about what they might do in the next few years:

"I still don't know what it is I want to do."

Chapter 4

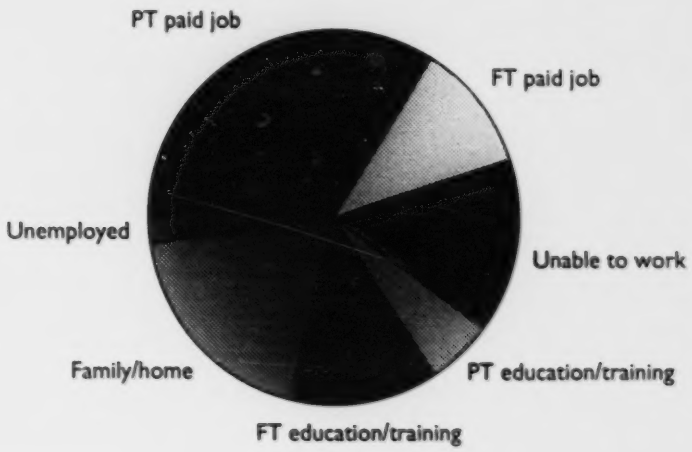
WOW Students Two Years On

Two year groups of students, A and C,[3] were surveyed a second time, two years after their course had finished. This section describes their situation and compares it with the position of former participants at the one year stage. Taking the two year groups together, what were they doing at the two year stage?

Activities two years later

Two years after WOW, under a half of former students were in paid work (45%), approximately three-quarters of whom were employed part-time (Figure 13). Just under a fifth were in education or training, the majority full-time. A similar proportion were looking after their family or home (19%) and 15% were unable to work because of illness or disability. Although there are some differences between the two year groups, the numbers are too small to be able to determine whether these are real differences or not.

Figure 13: Main activity two years after WOW



[3] A: WOW autumn 1990 and spring 1991; C: WOW autumn 1992 and spring 1993.

Table 1

Women's activity over two year period after WOW

Stability		**Mobility**	
One year post WOW in:	*Two years post WOW still in:*	*One year post WOW in:*	*Two years post WOW moved to:*
FT job	FT job	FT job	PT job
Self-employed	Self-employed	Self-employed	FT education
PT job	PT job	PT job	FT job
PT job	PT job	PT job	FT job
PT job	PT job	PT job	Family/home
PT job	PT job	FT education	FT job
PT job	PT job	FT education	PT job
PT job	PT job	PT education	Unable to work
Family/home	Family/home	PT education	FT job
Family/home	Family/home	Family/home	PT job
Family/home	Family/home	Family/home	PT job
Family/home	Family/home	Family/home	FT education
Family/home	Family/home	Family/home	Other
FT education	FT education	Unemployed	PT job
FT education	FT education	Unemployed	Family/home
PT education	PT education	Unable to work	Unemployed
PT education	PT education	Other	Unable to work
PT education	PT education	Other	FT education
Unable to work	Unable to work		
Unable to work	Unable to work		

These figures present the overall picture for the two year groups. Looking beyond the group level, one can see what actually happened to individual women during this period. As Table 1 shows, just over half of the women[4] had the same main activity one year and two years after their WOW course and just under a half had changed. The questionnaire also provided information about women's activities at six other time points since leaving WOW. In general, women in the mobile group were mobile not only between the one year and two year points but most had also been in another activity at some stage over the two years. But although it is possible to categorise former students as "stable" or "mobile", this does not mean that one category is a positive outcome and the other is a

4 This analysis is restricted to women for whom data is available both time points.

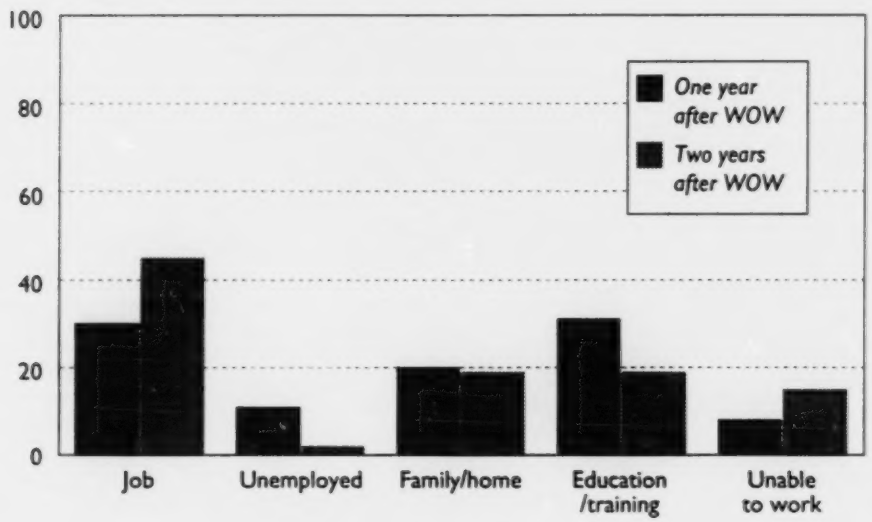
negative one. In both, there are likely to be some women for whom it is a positive situation while for others it may be negative. Judging it at a superficial level, most in the mobile category have moved in what would be judged as a positive direction.

The table also illustrates the extent of movement after WOW. It is evident that after a course such as WOW, the majority of participants do not enter a permanent or relatively long-term activity. This suggests that short-term destination analysis of course participants is only of limited value. The data also illustrates the complexity of real lives, especially those of women. It highlights too, the incremental and, of necessity, flexible nature of participants' attempts to put their course plans into action.

Differences between one and two years after WOW

Comparing the main activity of former students one year post WOW and two years later, there were some changes over this time. A higher proportion of women were in paid employment at the two year stage than after one year (45% vs 30%, Figure 14) and fewer were in education or training (19% vs 31%). There was also a slight decrease in the proportion of women unemployed but a slight increase in the percentage unable to work. On the whole, there was a shift towards employment by the two year point.

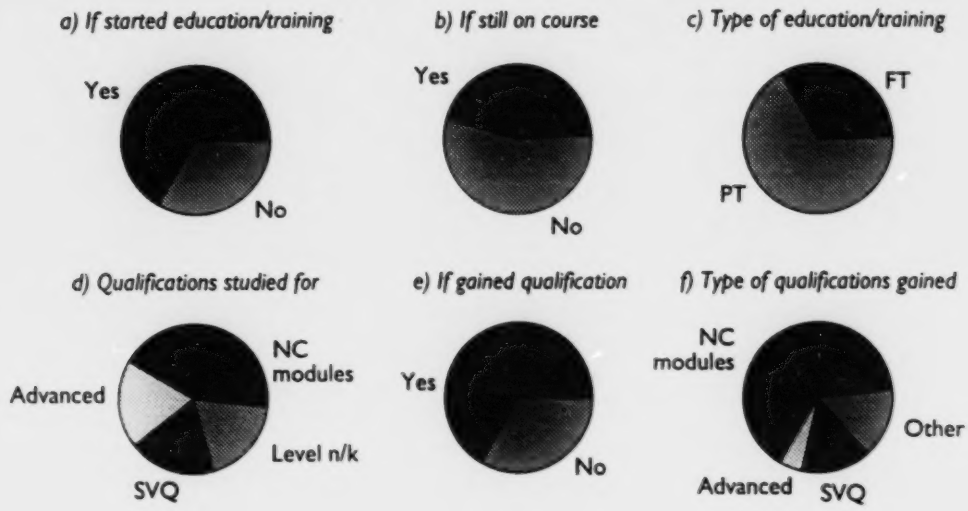
Figure 14: Main activity one year and two years after WOW



Qualifications

Two years after their WOW course, over two-thirds of former students had been, or were, involved in some sort of education and training (67%, Figure 15a). This compares with over a half at the one year post-WOW stage (Figure 8). At the one year point, two-thirds of those who had started a course had not finished it. A year later, the proportion still on course was smaller but still substantial – under a half were still studying (45%, Figure 15b). The type of education did not vary much, that is at both stages, around two-thirds were studying on a full-time basis (Figure 15c). National Certificate

Figure 15: Participation in education and training two years after WOW



modules were the most commonly taken qualifications with the rest divided among Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) advanced and level unknown (Figure 15d). Just over two-thirds of those who had started a course had achieved a qualification by the two year stage (67%) (Figure 15e), the majority of whom had gained NC modules (65%, Figure 15f).

Employment

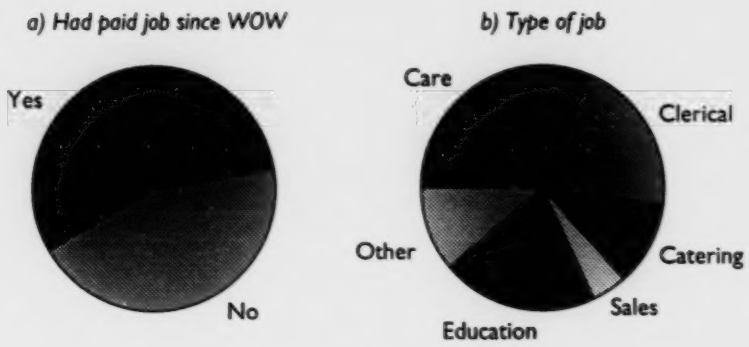
As might be expected the proportion of former WOW students in paid work by two years after WOW was greater than at the one year point. One year after WOW, two-fifths of former students had had a paid job, by two years later, well over a half had been in paid employment at some point since finishing their WOW course (56%, Figure 16a). Over a third had had more than one job (35%), which is also an increase compared to the one year stage (35% vs 27%). The proportion who had more than one job reinforces the point made earlier that there is considerable movement between and within different statuses after finishing WOW.

Those in a paid job two years after their WOW course were working in largely the same employment sectors as at the one year point:

- care eg creche worker, auxiliary nurse
- clerical eg accounts assistant, senior administrative assistant
- sales eg sales assistant, assistant manageress
- catering eg cook, assistant housekeeper
- education eg language tutor, community development worker (Figure 16b).

The main difference was that no-one was employed in cleaning. The numbers involved are small so it is not possible to draw firm conclusions but it may be that this change indicates that immediately after WOW, some women fall back on more easily obtained low-skilled jobs to help them financially while they put their plans into action. Certainly one woman, a year after the course, wrote:

Figure 16: Employment two years after WOW



> ***"I plan to finish my modules then try to find a job in an office. My part-time job is cleaning but I don't intend to keep it as I want to work in an office."***

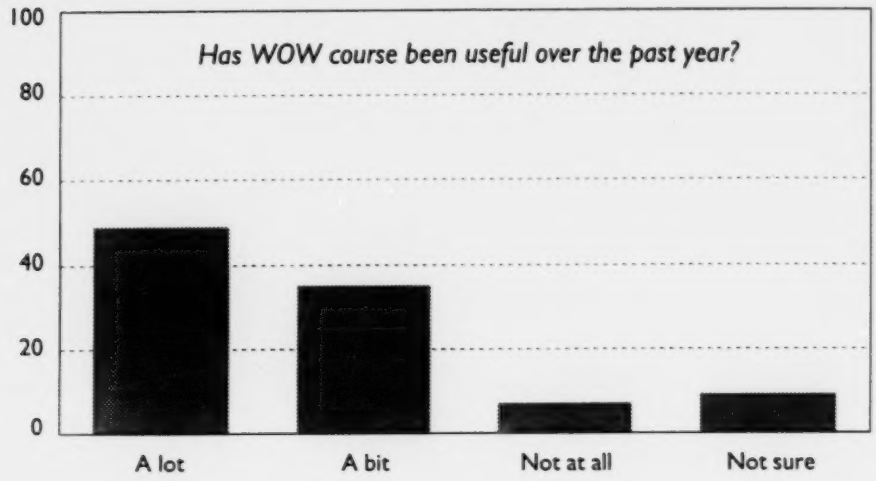
The sorts of areas that women were working in can be described as typically "female" jobs. But it should be remembered that increasing the numbers of women in non-traditional areas of work is not one of the stated aims of WOW, although if any participant wants to enter a non-traditional job, she will be encouraged and supported in this. The more relevant question for WOW is whether the course helps women to achieve jobs they would not otherwise gain without participation in WOW. Because some were still at an early or interim stage in their post-course plans, it is not possible to make a final judgement of the success of WOW in improving women's occupational outcomes, even two years later. The point is made several times in this report that the main reason for former WOW students undertaking subsequent education and training is to gain qualifications to enable them to enter the type and level of jobs that were previously beyond their reach. Without WOW, some would not have aspired either to education and training or to the level of job for which their qualifications will qualify them. But it is also important to judge women's employment outcomes in participants' own terms, irrespective of the area or level of work, for example, the one former student working as a domestic assistant a year after her course clearly valued the role of WOW in this:

> ***"... my life has changed since doing the WOW course... I think it is due to my course that I got my job."***

Looking back on WOW

Two years post-WOW, former participants were still very positive about the value of their course to them. Two years is quite a long time afterwards but very few failed to answer this question. Well over four-fifths felt that their WOW course had been useful to them over the past year (84%, Figure 17). Nearly a half judged it to have been very useful and just over a third rated it "a bit" useful (49% and 35%, Figure 17). The response overall was slightly less positive than at the one year stage (84% vs 90%) but the difference is not significant. Assertiveness training, work experience, decision-making and interview practice were highly valued at both time points (Figure 18).

Figure 17: Opinion of WOW course two years later



But by two years post WOW, both information about jobs and information about courses were somewhat less likely to be found useful than after one year (eg 85% vs 71%: information about courses). It may be that participants are more likely to use this sort of information in the shorter term after their WOW course. Careers advice was again the lowest rated aspect of WOW although over two-thirds still felt it had been useful to them. This is a smaller proportion than one year after WOW (65% vs 77%).

Two years later, the most commented on aspect of WOW was still its value in building confidence and helping women to think about themselves, their abilities and what they wanted to do:

> *"The WOW course made me think that I had a lot more to offer and that it was time that I made a move and got out of the rut."*
>
> *"[It helped me] by making me realise that I was an individual as well as a wife and mum and by giving me confidence."*
>
> *"WOW gave me the confidence to go for what is usually classed as 'men's work'."*

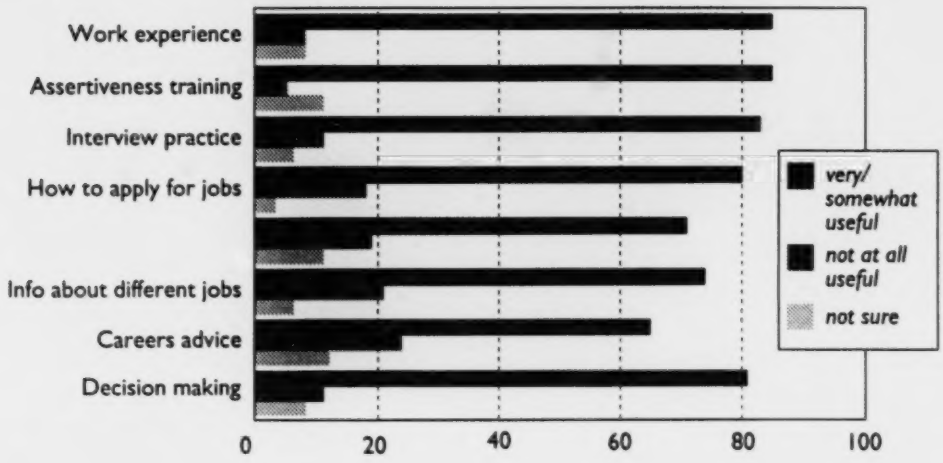
Other comments concerned gaining practical skills and information:

> *"It helped me learn how to fill forms and I learned how to write applications."*
>
> *"It made me know the Scottish system (especially educational) better than before and my spoken English improved a lot."*

Students were also asked whether they had any suggestions to make about what else might be included on WOW courses on the basis of their experience. The suggestions made covered three main areas. One concerned more time for certain aspects of the course – assertiveness, work experience and interview practice. A second was for greater post-course contact:

> *"Follow-up procedure as there can be an anti-climax once course is finished if you haven't found a direction."*

Figure 18: Opinion of different parts of WOW course two years later



The third area related to study skills and qualifications. One suggestion was that participants should be able to gain formal recognition for some aspects of their WOW course through Scotvec modules. The other aspect concerned study skills:

> *"If women are going on to FE, explaining how to study at home [should be included]."*

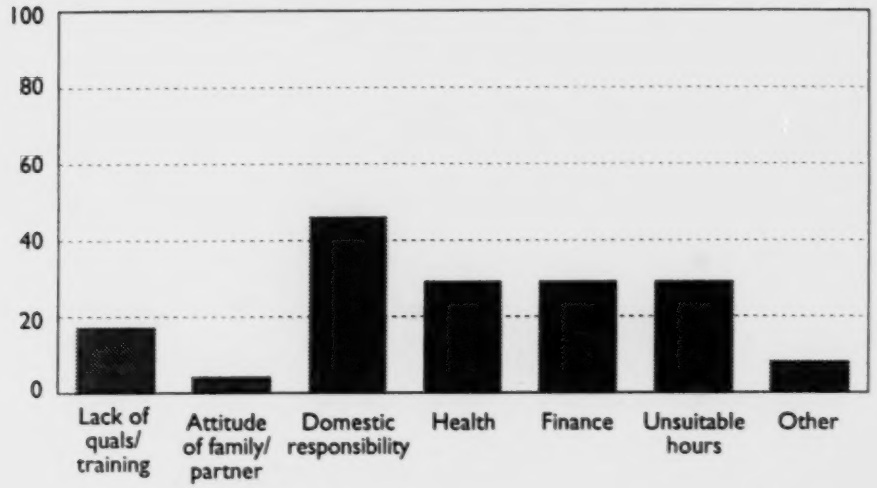
Difficulties encountered

When asked whether they had experienced any difficulties in carrying out their post-WOW plans, four-fifths of former participants responded that they had. The most frequently reported difficulty was domestic responsibilities, noted by under half of those who had encountered some sort of difficulty (46%, Figure 19). Health problems, finance and unsuitable hours had been a difficulty for well over a quarter of former participants (29% in each case). Lack of qualifications or training does not emerge as a major problem, probably because of the extent of participation in education and training post WOW. Only a very small proportion of women surveyed two years after WOW responded in the questionnaire that they had had difficulty in pursuing their plans because of the attitude of their family and partner. This is somewhat at odds with other research (eg *Women's Access to Jobs and Skills in Scotland,* 1992) and also the results of interviews held with former WOW students. In the interviews, a lack of active support was an issue for a number of women with a partner.

Future plans

A small proportion said that they had no major plans or that they saw themselves continuing in their present job (Figure 20). Nearly two-thirds, however, had several ideas in mind. Two-fifths planned to try and find a job while more than a quarter hoped to get a better job. Undertaking education and training was still seen as important – over two-fifths had plans in this direction and another fifth intended to complete their current

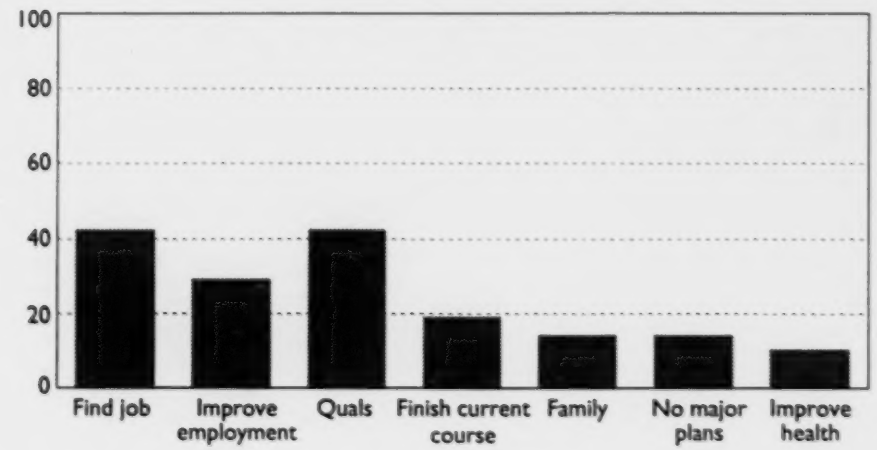
Figure 19: Difficulties in carrying out plans



course. 14% said they were deferring their plans till their children were older and a tenth were hoping for an improvement in their health.

The suggestions that women made to improve their chances of carrying out their plans fell largely into three areas – childcare, education and training and employment. Better after-school and holiday care were mentioned specifically as well as financial help for childcare. Education and training were seen as important to progressing their plans, and the need for locally based courses and courses with childcare was noted by several women. Suggestions about employment mainly concerned the need for employers to be more prepared to give women with children a chance to prove they could be reliable employees.

Figure 20: Plans for next few years: WOW students two years later



Chapter 5

Themes and Issues

This chapter considers the themes and issues arising from both the questionnaire and interview data.

The value of WOW

Impact on women's lives

The large majority of women who responded to the questionnaire were very positive that their WOW course had been useful to them. The interviews provided an opportunity to explore this further. How important had WOW been to them? It was striking that more than half of those interviewed (14 out of 25) felt that WOW had not just been "useful" but that it had had a major impact on their lives, on their attitudes, expectations and activities:

> *"I think that the WOW course made me think that I had a lot more to offer and that it was time that I made a move and got out of the rut."*
>
> *"The WOW course gave me a lot of pride in myself, I realised I can do it if I really want to. No one is going to do it for you... and I should do it sooner rather than later."*

and

> *"my idea about work was going back to office work or shop work or whatever fitted in with the family. I've worked in laundries, stacking shelves, anything that fitted in with my kids, I gave myself a back seat all the time. I would never have thought of a career, something I really wanted to do. When I was on WOW, for the first time in my life I thought about myself. The course gave me the option of seeing what I'd like to do. When I left school my dad said 'get an office job' it was a good job in his eyes... so that's what I done. WOW gave me the chance years later to say 'where's my life going, what would I like to do'."*

About a quarter of the women interviewed felt that WOW had helped them and made a difference but not to quite the same extent:

> *"It has helped me to get more information about my future career and build my confidence."*
>
> *"WOW boosted me a lot, I'd lost self-confidence, it's made me more assertive but I haven't got the job I would like to have had."*

The remaining interviewees did not feel that WOW had been particularly significant for them:

> *"I found parts of the course irrelevant and wondered if I should continue... but it did help build my confidence."*

"WOW didn't really help sort things out [her future options] tho' it did give me time to think about myself and try things even if I failed."

WOW is clearly perceived as useful and successful by the majority of those interviewed and it had a significant effect on the attitude and expectations of a substantial proportion of them.

It is clear that the most fundamental benefit of WOW for the majority of participants was that it helped to increase their confidence and self-esteem. Assertiveness training and other course activities contributed to this but the vital element was the basic approach of WOW – that it focused on participants as individuals, encouraging them to think about and value themselves, their needs and their plans for the future:

"It [the WOW course] made me realise I can do it if I really want to, that I was important enough to do something for myself. You have an idea that you might want to do this or that but you don't feel you're important enough to give yourself that time, or take that time away from your family."

and

"Finding out about me and what I needed [was good] because you don't sit down and think about things like that at any other time. Everything is centred round your family."

A starting-point

One of the most common remarks in interviews was that WOW had been a starting-point for them and had given them the push they needed:

"I don't think I'd be doing what I'm doing now without WOW, it was a good starting-point for me, it led me on to new things... It helped me decide what I would like to do. I'm more assertive and can make more decisions."

"WOW was a good stepping-stone, it changed my whole life style, you got breathing space on WOW to make up your mind what you want to do. It did a lot for me and in the right way."

WOW also helped women get started by providing more specific help and information about educational and job opportunities:

"I never knew about these things [college] till I started WOW and it's through WOW I found out about other courses."

"It helped by taking the mystery from further education systems."

Others found the practical job-seeking skills helpful. Work experience, in particular, was highly valued by participants. For a number, the possibility of going on placement was a key factor in their decision to go on WOW:

"The WOW course I liked because of the work placement, the others didn't have that."

Women found their placements useful in a variety of ways, confirming or refining their interest in an area, letting them discover that they would not want to pursue a particular career, giving them new ideas and putting them in touch with potential employers:

"I did WOW to get work experience in the area I thought I was interested in. I'm a terrible person for thinking something is a good idea till I actually try it out... I found it [placement] such a good experience and think I'm the right sort of person for that sort of thing."

"The work placement was useful, it gives you an insight into the job and whether it's for you or not... I had a placement in a nursery because I'd always thought about being a nursery nurse but I realised I didn't really want to."

and

"...the placement, it's how I got the job, I was approached about it [by placement employer], I probably wouldn't have applied for it if it had been advertised because I don't have the qualifications."

The organisation of placements was an aspect of WOW that some women, especially from the earlier WOW courses, felt could be better organised:

"There's always been the problem as far as I can make out with WOW that job placements aren't organised properly. They should have a pool of placements.... for some reason they don't seem to have it. The last WOW course, I know the people the week before they went on their placements, didn't know where they were going."

A central bank of placements for local co-ordinators to draw on was set up in 1993 by the WOW Project Office to overcome some of the organisational problems.

Testing their return

Another aspect is that for the many participants with dependent children, WOW gave them a chance to assess their childcare needs, in some cases to overcome their wariness about leaving their children with strangers, and to assess how they would cope with combining work or training and looking after their family:

"Last year on WOW and having to have childcare, it really brought home to me the difficulties with childcare... I'd got a couple of friends willing to look after the kids, I'd no problems with the friend looking after my son, she was flexible but the lassie looking after my daughter was a bit funny if I was slightly late or early. I was on tenterhooks the whole time."

"I got back from the course after four [in the afternoon], picked the kids up at five, got back, got the tea on, got the house tidied, got everyone eaten, got cleaned up, got the kids to bed... and I was shattered, completely shattered."

"Apart from the kids going to school, I hadn't left them with anybody apart from family .. that was the most difficult thing in coming to the WOW course, leaving the kids all day then having them go to the creche/after-school club, but as they both thoroughly enjoyed themselves and realising that they would be OK with someone else, that was a big help."

Of course, because childcare provision is an integral part of WOW, participants were in a much better position than most experienced afterwards. The effect of childcare responsibilities on women's plans and post-course activities is discussed below.

Selection for WOW

Who is likely to benefit from WOW?

A fundamental question for WOW is which women are likely to benefit from the course. WOW is seen as a "second level" course that is more demanding and intensive than other courses for women returners such as "Options and Choices". WOW is seen as a follow-on to such a course. So in selecting women for WOW, there is an idea that participants should be at a certain level of "preparedness" or "readiness" to benefit from it. The questionnaire data suggests that pre-WOW qualifications, marital status and the availability of suitable, and affordable, childcare provision post-WOW, each had an influence on women's ability to benefit from WOW.

Having said this, it is clear from the interviews that other, less obvious factors, also play a part and contribute to the varying experiences of women on WOW and their post-course outcomes.

The effect of woman's "readiness" for WOW on how much they benefit from the course and their subsequent outcomes is open to debate. Certainly, several of the interviewees felt that some of the others on their course were not at the stage of being able to progress much beyond it, either because of childcare commitments or because they were not yet seriously thinking about going back to work, whether directly or after further training. Out of 25 women interviewed, one had probably been in this position. However, although childcare is a problem and did have an impact on many women's plans, the research shows that it is not possible to say that just because a woman has several young children, she is unlikely to benefit much from WOW and would be unlikely to make much progress afterwards. Being able to overcome childcare problems depended on a variety of factors which were unique to each woman, so it is not possible to be definitive about who will succeed in doing so.

Determination is important. In some cases, women simply went ahead with their plans and trusted that somehow they would manage to sort out their childcare provision. They felt that if they thought too much about the potential difficulties, they would be deterred from going ahead with any plans:

> ***"Sometimes I think you've just got to close your eyes to childcare."***

This, however, is a risky strategy and one that is not open to every woman.

It is also notable that a number of the women interviewed had been quite vague about the aims of WOW and what they might get out of the course, but this does not appear to be a particularly relevant factor when looking at their outcomes. Some of those who had started WOW without much thought were among those who felt it had had a major impact on their lives:

> ***"At first I wasn't very sure about it... it was just something to do, to meet people. I went along and I've never looked back since, I haven't actually, I've gone forward ever since."***

The one consistent factor that does come through from the research is that those who are least likely to benefit from WOW are those who are already beyond it, rather than not being ready for it. This arises, for example, where someone is unable to find a job or

where there are no other local courses available which provide childcare. One interviewee, for example, had already decided to change from catering to clerical work and so had gone on a clerical Employment Training Scheme. She had, however, not been able to find a job and as she said:

> ***"I did the clerical course, that lasted a year and then I was at a loose end... X mentioned WOW and I also discussed it with Y and I thought 'why not'."***

There is an understandable temptation for someone to apply for a course, and for the organisers to accept her, when there are few other available prospects. But for this woman, WOW was of limited value.

The clarity of women's plans by the end of their WOW course does not seem to have had a particular bearing on the outcome for them. Some needed more time to make up their minds and the women's decisions and actions were influenced by subsequent events, for example, by seeing a particular job advertised. An element of "opportunism" is evident. In this context what is important is that the WOW course had both helped to create some of these opportunities (for example, by extending women's contacts) and had also helped to build up the women's confidence so that they were able to respond to opportunities as they arose. This is illustrated by one participant who had been undecided at the end of her WOW course:

> ***"I still wasn't sure... I thought I'd be the only one in the group going back to being just a housewife."***

In fact this woman went on to have a busy and challenging year helping to set up a local childcare project under a community development traineeship:

> ***"I haven't had a break since last year... I'm lying in bed at night thinking about this project, I just seem to be thinking about it all the time."***

Yet, at one level, her involvement seems to have been fortuitous. The traineeship had been suggested by a friend from the WOW course and she had mistakenly thought it would mean working as a creche assistant:

> ***"I thought the project was all set up and I was going to work on it as a creche worker, that's why I went for it... I got the shock of my life, I found I was to start everything up. I thought I couldn't do it but Pat [her friend] talked me into it. I just went for it... it's been really hard, really difficult. I've got no time to say I can't do it and leave it. I have to try... I never thought I'd achieve anything like what I've done".***

This woman had finished her WOW course without a definite plan in mind but what she had gained from WOW meant that she had been able to take advantage of the opportunity when it came up:

> ***"I probably wouldn't have gone for the traineeship if I hadn't been on the WOW course. I wouldn't have had the courage to go for it... It brought me out of myself... I was really away in my shell and didn't even speak to anyone apart from my family... I had no pals and felt that every day you were just stuck in the house and it was just speak to your kids and husband... I'm still shy in a way but I can talk to people now... We also got job interview stuff [on WOW] which obviously I hadn't done for a few years, that helped as well, and filling out applications".***

Recruitment to courses

The research demonstrates that it is very difficult to set hard and fast selection criteria for WOW courses. This makes it even more important that potential students have as much information as possible about WOW so that they can make an informed decision whether to take part or not. A substantial proportion of those interviewed had been uncertain about the aims and likely content of the course. Several commented that it would have been useful to have had an individual interview with the course co-ordinator to discuss their own particular situation:

> ***"Open Days are good but you don't get to ask personal questions and relate things to your circumstances."***

Another consideration when selecting participants is the effect of individual women on the group and the overall mix on the course. From the interviews, one issue is where an individual has fairly severe personal or emotional problems that cannot be handled on a WOW course. This can side-track the course and take up a lot of a co-ordinator's attention and energy:

> ***"It was sometimes hard with certain people in the group who were up and down emotionally. Sometimes people are looking for more than what the course could or should be doing... it was a hard job for the co-ordinator."***

Apart from care in selection, co-ordinators need to be able to recognise when to refer some participants on for other professional help. But where such help is not readily available the co-ordinator can feel under pressure to deal with the situation herself.

Childcare

20 of the 25 women interviewed had dependent children and their plans were closely linked to their childcare responsibilities and childcare needs. Their decisions about employment and hours of work, about whether to study part-time or full-time, and their choice of course were all affected:

> ***"Childcare is holding me back from doing what I really want. I would like to go on to college and get qualifications to get me the job I want."***

It was also clear that the provision of childcare on a course could be the deciding factor in a woman's decision whether or not to go on it. This is illustrated in case-study of Brenda. She felt that she had made the wrong decision but she had been strongly swayed by the availability of childcare on one course and not the other. Another woman acknowledged that she might have been better to take an Access course rather than her present one:

> ***"An Access course might have been better to build up my study skills but this is a better option because of childcare."***

The majority of women with young children had experienced problems with their childcare. Having family to help with childcare could be useful but it could also lead to tension with the relative concerned. Several of the women in full-time education had run into problems when on placement since the hours did not fit in with their existing childcare arrangements. One woman partially resolved her childcare needs by setting up an after-school club herself.

After-school and school holiday provision were identified as just as much of a problem as pre-school care:

> *"... my three are at school but in saying that after-school care is just as big a problem as nursery care. And school holidays, that's the killer, that's really bad, trying to find the funding for childcare."*

Most of those interviewed with children who were, or had been, in full-time education mentioned the effect it had had on their children and felt considerable guilt and conflict about it. Several pointed out that it had forced them to do less for their children who, consequently, had had to learn to be more independent:

> *"To go to college full-time you've got to distance yourself from your family and need to be able to say this is your time."*

> *"They've had to grow up suddenly, they're not relying on me to do everything. Before if I said 'tidy up your room' they knew I'd end up doing it but now they know I mean it."*

While this greater independence could be seen as a positive outcome, most of the women who were, or had been, studying full-time did feel that their children had "lost out" because they had less time to spend with them:

> *"... there was no time for them at night, I hadn't been with them all day and I should have been making time to sit down with them at night."*

Attitude of partners and family

We saw earlier that only a small percentage of former WOW participants who were surveyed two years after their course stated that the attitude of their family or partner had been a difficulty in carrying out their plans. This is at odds with other research (Training 2000, 1992). The interviews with former participants with partners help to explain the questionnaire responses. Only a few of those interviewed had partners or family who were supportive in an active way:

> *"He has helped with having David... when I had to study he used to take the bairn away to the park or something."*

> *"To go to college you need the backing of your family to do it, things do slide but my family did understand."*

But the more common reaction was one of acquiescence:

> *"He's been OK, he doesn't notice if things aren't done."*

> *"I don't know what he thinks, he doesn't really say, I've never asked him."*

and

> *"When I went on the WOW course he wasn't chuffed at all... now I don't upset him, I just get on with it and tell him what he needs to know."*

In these sorts of circumstances, women might not define their partners' attitude as a "difficulty" in pursuing their plans although they were not receiving active support and encouragement. This might explain some of the questionnaire responses.

But for some others, their partners' reaction, first to their participation in WOW, and then to their subsequent plans, had been a serious problem:

> *"When I was on WOW, Tom just went haywire... it was as if he felt threatened by it. In one breath he'd say to me 'I'm really glad for you' and then in the next he'd be throwing it in my face 'what are you doing this for, you should be out getting a job'. He used to belittle me.... everything I was trying to build up in myself, he was trying to take away."*

Other relations, such as mothers and sisters, could also be negative about women's new ideas and plans:

> *"I've had my mum saying to me 'you're no with the kids enough'. I was forever falling out with her... my sister was watching Rachel and my mum was watching my wee laddie which was OK but she could be a bit funny. She still says 'you're not spending enough time with them'".*

But, on the whole, mothers and sisters seem to have been more of a support, particularly helping out with childcare:

> *"My mum helps looking after Ian, I could put him in the after-school club but he's been ill and isn't feeling very secure so I'm not keen on that. It's better that my mum looks after him. It's important to know your kids are OK."*

It is inevitable that for women on WOW courses who have families, re-assessing themselves and their lives will have an impact on partners and children. Several of those interviewed felt that the effect of their participation in WOW could have been discussed on their course:

> *"...the WOW course is centred on you... they talk about your family but it's mostly how much time's spent doing this and that... there's a space here – how's your family reacting to it. It's a great course but maybe there should be something, even just at the end, how's the family reacted, how the husband's reacted through this 12 week period."*

Education and training after WOW

The majority of the women interviewed were, or had been, in education or training at some time since their WOW course. They had done so mainly for job-related reasons:

> *"I wanted to go and train [in computing] to try and get a better job."*
>
> *"When I did my placement [on WOW] I realised I needed qualifications for the job I wanted and so I got in touch with X college."*

and

> *"I want a job to get off benefits, to get a mortgage and some stability for myself and my son."*

Although most women gave job-related reasons, there was also a strong element of personal development:

> *"I want to see what I'm capable of because I didn't have a chance when I was younger. I want to see how far I can go."*

It is evident that WOW had been a positive learning experience for most participants and had given them the confidence to think that they were capable of further education and training:

> *"I always felt, I'd been out of work for eight years, I can't really do it, I've no qualifications, there's no way I can go back... and I'd just assumed that I couldn't learn again..."*

A review of Edinburgh District Council schemes for long-term unemployed people pointed out, participation in the schemes had encouraged a "habit of training" among trainees, that their experience had "engendered an enthusiasm for training and an awareness of its ability to empower" (Partners in Economic Development Ltd, 1993). It acknowledged that this is a substantial achievement of the schemes; this "habit of training" seems also to be a feature developed by WOW courses.

Most of the women were positive about the course they had undertaken after WOW, finding the experience stimulating and worthwhile although hard work:

> *"It's excellent, I'm learning an awful lot, especially about computers... I'm now reading a lot more than I did and not story books. It's great, it's like being re-born, my brain's being re-born."*

Several did comment unfavourably on the different teaching style compared with their WOW course:

> *"It was more like school, you sat behind a desk and they told you, with X [WOW Co-ordinator] she asked you and you have your opinion and comments."*

One woman, in particular, had had an unhappy time at college. In this case, apart from difficulty with her course work, a specific problem was what she felt to be college staff's negative attitude to her background. In contrast, several others had found staff at their college to be supportive and accommodating:

> *"It took me a long time to fit in at college but the tutors were very good, they would take time and help and tell me to come for help if I was stuck."*

Where former WOW participants had found themselves in a class composed mainly of young school-leavers, this seems to have been unsatisfactory:

> *"I didn't like it, I was in a class with kids who'd just left school and they were mucking about and the teacher was shouting... it was too much like being back at school. I wasn't happy in that class so I left."*

She later applied to another college:

> *"I've heard it's a lot better, one of my sister's friends is just finishing Communication 3 and it's all adults in that class and it's a small class which suits me better."*

An issue which emerged from the interviews and questionnaires was that WOW could do more to prepare participants for subsequent education and training. Although WOW had been crucial in helping them get to this stage, by increasing their confidence and giving them a positive experience of learning, a number did feel that WOW courses could do more. The two main aspects suggested by former participants concern information about college (especially finance) and study skills.

A number of those in education or training described their struggles to get to grips with course reading, essays and report writing. For example:

> *"I'm dreadful at report writing. I waffle... and my letter writing. I don't use the correct vocabulary... And she [the tutor] puts in all these big words... I use the dictionary a lot now. I'm getting there slowly."*

Study difficulties are not unique to former WOW students; this is a commonly reported difficulty among mature students. Indeed it is increasingly being recognised that school-leavers sometimes lack the necessary study skills for further and higher education. Former participants' experience of support with study skills from their college or training centre staff was mixed:

> *"I was struggling but I was too scared to ask for help... the tutor isn't the type you can approach, she's an old-style teacher."*

but

> *"When he realised I had a problem with the written work the tutor was very helpful."*

Several interviewees did note that some aspects of their WOW course had helped them on their later course, for example:

> *"The practice in presentations was good, I notice a difference between myself and other students [on current course] in attitude, doing it on WOW took the edge off it."*

But it seemed that written work is the biggest problem:

> *"We did written work [on WOW] but it never prepared me for college."*

Interviewees also suggested more information about college, in particular, more opportunity to find out what college is like through visits there, visits from college staff and also the chance to speak to mature students to try and get a better picture of the reality of college life:

> *"No-one from X [local college] came into the course. It would maybe be good to speak to mature female students, to get them to talk about their experiences and make sure women realise it is very hard work."*

Several felt that just being given information when they were on WOW was less effective than a more practical approach:

> *"We got the theory [about college] while on the course and I wrote it down but it would have been better to be practical, to actually go to college and talk."*

A number of women suggested that there should be fewer "fun" visits on WOW to enable more direct contact with further education:

> *"The visits like to theatres were nice and I really enjoyed it but it's not really teaching us about courses or jobs."*

As well as work placements, WOW might consider placements at college to allow women to do "taster courses". This was suggested by several interviewees.

Childcare responsibilities meant that some women felt they were not able to go to college at all, or, more especially, to do so on a full-time basis. Several of those who had

embarked on a full-time course had found their college unsympathetic to their childcare responsibilities, including in the organisation and allocation of placements and in changing course times at short notice.

Finance

The financial position of women in education and training varied, some found it a struggle while others were less badly off. Much depended on individual women's circumstances but how different colleges allocated Access funds was also relevant in several cases. The loss of students' right to Housing Benefit was mentioned as a specific problem. For example, one interviewee, currently on a European-funded course and continuing to claim state benefits was facing the prospect of switching to a grant for subsequent years:

> ***"Next year I need to go on a grant and it will be a big problem rather than staying on benefits, I especially don't want to lose Housing Benefit. If I don't continue it'll be a waste of a year. You're always made to feel guilty, I have to ignore my son when I've got things to do for college and money is yet another pressure."***

The financial implications of further study are complicated, especially for mature students such as former WOW participants because of the variety and complexity of their personal circumstances. But it was evident from the interviews that most did not have enough information about financial matters. As already noted, more information on finance was a suggestion made by former WOW participants:

> ***"Visits from college staff to WOW to talk about courses and especially about finance would be useful, people were worried about fees, whether they were going to get any help."***

One woman pointed out, women whose partners are in employment are disadvantaged:

> ***"If you're a married woman you're penalised... because my husband's working I have to pay for college courses tho' I'm not earning. My husband's OK about money but..."***

Finance is also an issue for some women with disabilities when considering their job plans, as one commented:

> ***"I'm sure I can only work so many hours without losing benefit... If I was working for the same money I'd do it but if I'm worse off then I wouldn't do it."***

The question of losing benefits is a particular problem when those who have been receiving disability-related benefits are first trying out paid work and are not sure if they will be able to cope or not in the long-term. Once such benefits are lost, they are extremely difficult to qualify for again.

Follow-up and careers guidance

The point was made earlier that women reinterpreted and revised the plans made at the end of their WOW course or sometimes deferred them to a later period. As the questionnaire data show, a substantial proportion of women did not enter a long-term

or permanent position in the first two years after WOW. The questionnaires, and especially the interviews, highlight that former participants' plans were often incremental in nature:

> ***"It didn't fall into place there and then [on the WOW course], its taken a long time for me to say 'social work', that's it. If it takes me five years that's what I'll do at the end of the day. In the meantime, I can do my voluntary work, I've got my job... its been a stepping stone. I'm still on another step doing my Higher English".***

> ***"I know it's going to be hard, that's why I'll do the part-time ones [modules] first and see how I get on being at college part-time..."***

In the context of the long-term and sometimes changing nature of their plans, a number of interviewees wanted more post-course support, especially careers advice, from WOW. Some had benefited considerably from the fact that their WOW course had been based in a local organisation which had been able to offer continuing support and advice. In several other cases the same co-ordinator had run subsequent courses and had been able to help previous students although this was not part of her job. Depending on which WOW course they had attended, women may or may not have had easy access to further support.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The outcomes of WOW

The large majority of women who took part in the first four years of Women Onto Work courses were very positive about the value of their course to them subsequently. Figures such as their post-course employment and, especially, their participation rates in education and training are also positive. 45% of women were in paid employment two years after WOW and 67% had been in education or training over the two year period, two-thirds of whom had gained formal qualifications. In judging the extent of WOW's achievements, it is important to consider them in relation to its target group. The research shows that WOW students were disadvantaged in a number of ways: a smaller percentage had formal qualifications compared to the national average, a much bigger proportion had dependent children than women of working age nationally and more of them were lone parents. Students from the Black Minority Ethnic and Women with Disabilities courses faced particular difficulties specific to their ethnicity or disability. WOW and its participants have therefore achieved a substantial measure of success in the context of considerable difficulties. Moreover, the employment and education and training statistics presented in this report only give an interim picture since a number of former students were still in the process of carrying out their plans.

Post-course destination figures to date are only a partial indicator of WOW's performance but they are also only a partial measure in a different way. A different type of measure is the effect of WOW on participants' attitudes. WOW achieved a great deal in this respect, in raising many participants' self-esteem and ambitions and motivating them to take the next step.

Selection for WOW

The success of any course depends on recruiting participants who are in a position to be able to benefit from it. The research suggest this is not a straightforward task for WOW since it is not easy to pre-judge how far someone will respond and be motivated by the course and therefore be more able to cope with, for example, childcare problems. The research does indicate that the one category of women who are likely to gain least from WOW are those who are already beyond it and really need vocationally specific training or to find employment.

The impact of childcare needs

The effect of childcare responsibilities on women's plans and activities was perhaps the most predictable aspect of the research. The plans of all of the women with children were closely linked to their childcare responsibilities. Their decisions about employment,

hours of work, which course to take and whether to study full-time or part-time were all affected. More extensive and affordable childcare is required but also a change of attitude among some employers and education and training providers. A willingness to give women with children an opportunity, and greater flexibility in organising their work or study arrangements would make life easier for many mothers.

The attitude of partners and families

WOW participants encountered various reactions to their involvement in WOW, and to their subsequent plans, from their partners and families. Mothers and sisters could be critical but were more usually a source of support, especially helping with childcare. Partners were less likely to provide support and encouragement, the more common response was one of acquiescence and some women encountered outright opposition. It is likely that as women on WOW courses re-assess themselves, their partners and families will be affected and this is an issue that needs to be discussed within the courses.

Education and training

As has already been indicated, a high proportion of WOW students had been, or were in, education and training. The data on education and training indicates that the WOW courses had been successful in motivating participants to overcome their often negative experience of education and their lack of confidence about entering formal education. The majority had undertaken their post-WOW course to improve their job prospects, a necessary step because of their previous low level of qualifications. Given the importance of education and training to participants' prospects, WOW courses could put more emphasis on this area, and especially include more direct contact through visits, speakers (including mature students), and offer educational as well as work placements. WOW might also consider how to help women further in developing study skills if they are likely to go on to education or training.

A number of other issues about women's experience of post-WOW education and training emerge from the research concerning childcare, teaching and learning methodologies and learning support. They illustrate the difficulty of the move from access type courses to other, often less flexible. These findings echo those in other research (Training 2000, 1992 and NIACE, 1993).

Mainstream education and training provision was very important for former participants to enable them to realise the ambitions that WOW had helped to raise. But the two types of education provision are different in nature and the transition can be a difficult one for women. Effort is required on both sides. WOW courses could do more to prepare women for college life both academically and financially and build more links to formal provision, for example, by arranging educational as well as work placements for participants. But changes are also required in mainstream education and training, including the provision of adequate childcare, timetabling arrangements that cater for students with domestic responsibilities and more appropriate teaching and learning approaches.

The need for guidance

Most women's plans were incremental in nature, taking into account family responsibilities and the need to acquire further qualifications. The circumstances of many women's lives meant that they had to be flexible in the face of changing circumstances and need to be well-informed about the financial implications of their choices. They therefore require early access to ongoing, impartial guidance after WOW. There is a limit to the post-course support and guidance WOW can, and should, provide. It is important that while on course, participants become familiar with all the possible post-course sources of advice. The fundamental problem, however, is the lack of a comprehensive adult guidance system.

Moving ahead

WOW has had a large measure of success in motivating participants and helping many "get started". But women's experiences after their course demonstrate that this is only one part of the solution. A range of other developments need to happen alongside courses such as WOW to enable participants to achieve their potential. Improvements in childcare, employment practice, education and training, guidance provision and student finance are all necessary.

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Appendix 1

Case Studies

The six case studies have been chosen to illustrate the range of women's opinion of WOW and their post-course experiences and activities

Denise

- in full-time education one year after WOW
- interviewed once, one year after WOW

Her placement while on WOW proved to be a major turning point for Denise. She had been thinking about going to college to "do something in the accounts line". When she came to choose her placement Denise decided that because she knew she wanted to do accounts, she would use the placement as an opportunity to try out a totally different, and in her mind, unrealistic type of job:

> ***"I was so confident about the accounts course I didn't think I needed to make sure so I went for a chance to try a job I would never do."***

She chose a placement in the pathology department of a local hospital. Denise saw this as a level of job beyond her aspirations and one that was for people different from herself:

> ***"I thought a fancy job like that wasn't for me. I thought all the people there would have degrees and be snobbish".***

But she found the staff friendly and "ordinary", moreover she was fascinated by the work:

> ***"But they were just like me so I thought, 'why not, why not go for it', the job intrigued me".***

Denise therefore decided to go on a Science Access course after the WOW course and had just finished it when interviewed. It had been hard work but rewarding:

> ***"It [the course] feels like it's taken over my life sometimes but passing assessments makes it worthwhile and satisfying... I also feel I have a fuller life, meeting new people and being intellectually stimulated."***

Denise had been accepted for a degree course in biochemistry, an achievement she felt for someone who had failed 'O' grade Chemistry at school. Although her particular interest is forensic science she decided on biochemistry for practical reasons:

> ***"I was thinking about my age when I'll have finished, I could possibly get into a forensic science job with the biochemistry degree but it would also mean other options are available so it's a more practical degree to take."***

She still cannot quite believe the direction her life has now taken:

> ***"I don't quite believe it yet, that I'm going to university... but I'm a lot more comfortable with the idea than I would have been a few years ago."***

The assertiveness training on WOW has been a help although she had initially been very sceptical about it:

> ***"I'd never been involved in anything like that, I thought it was going to be nonsense, not my sort of thing, but it was very good... I used to go for the quiet life but I'm more able now to speak up for myself."***

Finance had not been a particular problem while on the Access course since Denise remained on Income Support and also received help towards her childcare costs from the college Access fund. She is not sure whether she will be worse off on her degree course. Financial matters had not been covered on the Access course nor had she discussed this with anyone else.

She said she has been "quite lucky" with childcare because her son had been accepted by the college creche. Her son will be starting school at the same time as she starts university but she has been able to get him into an after-school club. It might be added that this is a club set up by another former WOW student.

Although the Access course left Denise with little free time, she did not find full-time studying and looking after her son too much of a burden, partly because of support from her mother:

> ***"I generally go to my mother's at the weekend so I get peace and quiet [to study]. I've also managed to study when my son's gone to bed."***

Denise's placement on WOW has been central to her change of plans but she also felt that, more generally, WOW had been an important starting point:

> ***"It gave me the push I needed... I'd been thinking about college for ages but I'd never have got round to it. They [WOW] gave you help and support as you went along; they'd listen and discuss how you'd got on, what you could do better when you thought you'd made a real mess of things. There was always someone there to go over it and help repair the damage."***

Maryam

- **in full-time education two years after WOW**
- **interviewed twice, one year and two years after WOW**

When interviewed one year after WOW, Maryam had just been accepted for a social work diploma course. This had been her immediate ambition on finishing WOW but financial difficulties and especially childcare problems had prevented her from doing so immediately. After a year she had decided to go ahead and apply for a place on the course still without resolving her childcare difficulties. It was only later that she had been able to organise local childcare for her two young children. Although pleased and excited

about the prospect of college, she had also been unsure how she would cope with a full-time course, her children and home:

> *"I don't know, I just don't know. I'm not the most organised of people... these holidays I've been panicking, I've labelled all the cupboards so I know where things are... I'm wondering how the kids are going to react..."*

At the time of the second interview, Maryam had just finished the first year of her course. It had been a tough year. Her health had suffered:

> *"The health problems were basically the shock of going on the course and then having to re-organise your whole life. It was from tiredness and overwork and stress. The stress of the course is horrendous."*

Part of the problem had been the volume of work, especially the amount of reading that had to be done at home. As Maryam pointed out, it is not simply a question of finding the time but being able to concentrate in the midst of other demands:

> *"You sit and read and it just goes over your head.. you've got at the back of your mind 'the dinner's on the stove... the ironing hasn't been done for a fortnight'."*

But the nature of the course is another major cause of stress since it deals with subjects such as child abuse and bereavement. The course staff try to be on hand to discuss the personal issues that such work raises but are not always available. Maryam had, however, received valuable support from staff outside the department.

Maryam had particularly valued the parts of the WOW course that had focused on the position of minority ethnic groups. There are no other minority ethnic students on her social work course and she said that although students give each other a lot of support, she does miss the presence of other minority ethnic students:

> *"Sometimes you feel quite isolated in that you don't have support from people who might have the same feelings as yourself."*

Especially at the beginning of the course she felt under pressure as the only minority ethnic student:

> *"... we do case-studies... what happens if the case-studies are anything to do with ethnic minorities, it's 'we'll ask Maryam, she'll have the answer'... You've got to gauge how much you give of yourself, 'No, I'm not the expert... you deal with it, it's not my problem, it's our problem'... and you can't talk to anyone about it who knows how you feel."*

Maryam's childcare arrangements had worked out reasonably well but this is very much due to her own efforts in setting up an after-school club at her children's primary school. But this has added to her workload and stress:

> *"... it's been a lot of work... and I worry about the finances at the club, I'm losing sleep over that."*

Even with the after-school club, she still has had to pay a childminder:

> *"The after-school club can't pick the children up til half past three because they've other pick-ups to do so I have to have a childminder from quarter past two til half past three."*

She feels college staff are not sympathetic to students' childcare needs; a particular problem for herself has been a clash of one of her placements with her children's school holidays when the after-school club is closed. She has been left to resolve this herself with her placement.

While finance has been a problem this year, Maryam is particularly apprehensive about the following year when her husband will return to full-time study:

> ***"The childcare hasn't been without its problems, but the most disturbing thing is paying out all the money and thinking 'God, what am I going to do next year?'... from September he's going to be back on his grant which is going to be half his wages... we're in debt already this year."***

She made the point forcibly that the lack of Housing Benefit was a major problem:

> ***"What I'd really say is the biggest drain on our finances at the moment is the Housing Benefit, students don't get rebates any more."***

Despite all the problems she has had, Maryam is in no doubt that she has made the right decision:

> ***"It's the right course, I wouldn't give it up for anything."***

With another year to go, she was not sure yet of the particular area of social work she would like to work in but her placements should help in this respect.

Looking back, WOW had been important in getting her started:

> ***"...The WOW course gave me a lot of pride in myself, I realised I can do it if I really want to. No one is going to do it for you... and I should do it sooner rather than later."***

Kate

- in a part-time job and doing voluntary work two years after WOW
- interviewed twice, one year and two years after WOW

When interviewed a year after WOW, she had made the point that putting her ideas into practice would be a slow, step-by-step process, especially in the light of her four young children and the absence of cheap, local childcare. Nevertheless, she felt that WOW had totally changed her outlook and had raised her ambitions for herself. Although she could not yet embark on a full-time social work course because of her children, she was gaining useful experience in her part-time job and through voluntary work on the management committee of a local project.

At her first interview Kate had just started work as a relief carer two evenings a week. She was still doing this when interviewed a year later but had taken on another part-time job working with under-fives. This, like her job as a relief carer, fits in with her family commitments, an important consideration with four children between six and thirteen:

"... it seems to fit in quite well with my children, during the day the sessions I'm working [with the under-fives] fit in with their schooling and then the sitter's service is two nights so it's quite good."

While she felt that these jobs were providing good experience towards her goal of social work, for example, her new job is giving her experience with children with disabilities, Kate nevertheless thought that she could extend herself further. She was therefore considering applying for a temporary development worker post in a local project:

"... it's going to be a challenge exceeding all others because it's going to push me... the other job [under 5s] it was new to me... but it's really old hat to me tho' in a new setting. But this one's going to be a real change, it's going to develop me further... I want a challenge now, I've obviously got to take on a challenge the situation I'm in now."

Kate is also interested in a locally based community work course currently being developed. Although her preferred option is a social work course, this is difficult because of childcare and finance. The proposed community course would include childcare and pay a reasonable allowance:

"I was really wanting to do social work, but if this thing comes up for community work, I'd enjoy that as well... the beauty of it [community course] is they're going to take care of your childcare and yes, you're getting well paid."

Such strong practical considerations would make the community course a more attractive option than a social work course. Nevertheless, Kate is not counting on being accepted:

"My long-term aim, if the community thing doesn't come off, I'm going to try – if I get the Communications – and go to college. But I want to wait till my children are old enough."

Although she was sometimes frustrated by her slow progress, she recognises that, largely because of WOW, she has taken control of her life and has a long-term aim that she is slowly moving towards:

"WOW made you really take a hold of yourself and decide things instead of just bouncing along 'oh well, I think I'll just do that later after the children' instead 'OK, I've got the children now but what am I going to be doing in 5 years, what am I going to do about that now... so when I say I sometimes feel like I'm standing still, I'm not, it's all been good, it's happened slowly, the sitting and I'm getting quite a lot out of the under-fives work as well."

Kate is also better off now financially; it was clear that having some money of her own was quite a thrill:

"I've got my wages from my two jobs. It's the first time that, I'm not a money person but when I got my wage slip through I thought 'look at this, yes, whoo'. Not that it was a lot; I went and bought myself a wee rug and thought that was great."

Brenda

- in a part-time job two years after WOW
- interviewed once two years after WOW

Brenda had fulfilled her immediate post-WOW plans by going on a full-time computing course. This was what she was doing when she completed her questionnaire one year after her WOW course.

When interviewed the following year, that is two years after WOW, Brenda explained that during the WOW course she had found it difficult to decide which of her two interests – community/childcare and computing – to follow up:

> *"I went to do my placement at x [project for young people] cos I wanted to work with kids in care, it was brilliant, I really loved it, but the thing with computers was always still niggling me..."*

Then, as part of the WOW course, she went on a visit to a financial services company:

> *"... when I seen the computers in the office there I knew, the first taste of computers, I was bitten."*

During her WOW course she had applied for both a childcare course and also a computing course but the factor which swung Brenda's decision in favour of the computing course was that it covered childcare costs:

> *"... I must admit, the childcare was there and tho' at the time I would have loved to have worked with kids, I couldn't afford it at the time,... the childcare definitely attracted me to it [the computing course]."*

Brenda had found the computing course stimulating and rewarding although it had put considerable strain on her, her relationship with her husband and on her children. She felt that her children had missed out:

> *"Tho' I loved the course there was a hell of a lot to take in... I found I was maybe taking three units home at night and the kids would be speaking to me and I'd go 'shut up and go out and play'."*

Brenda was proud of the National Certificate modules she had gained on the computing course:

> *"The biggest thrill for me at the end of it was receiving all these modules and the certificate and going for an interview and handing it over."*

Nevertheless, she has not been able to find a job using her computer training. She pinpointed the problem as being over-qualified for one level of work, for example VDU operator, but being under-qualified for programming jobs. For the latter, Brenda now realises she would have to undertake further study, at least to HNC or HND level – but she did not want to do this:

> *"But you were talking about years and I found I couldn't go back to study for all that time again."*

Brenda felt that she had not been properly informed by the training centre about her realistic prospects at the end of the course:

> ***"We were all under the impression that tho' we weren't guaranteed a job but that most of the women were kept on [by their placement employer], only two of the women on our course were kept on... we were led to believe we were going to be computer programmers, we've only touched on it."***

Now, with hindsight, Brenda feels she made the wrong choice in going on the computing rather than the childcare course but that her decision had been strongly influenced by the childcare provision of the computer course:

> ***"No, it wasn't the right decision, especially not from where I am now... I'm maybe a wee bit bitter about that, because I held out for the computer course and I never got out of it what I wanted... But it was definitely the childcare that attracted me to it, now if that had been there at the college on the other course [childcare] to even help me partly through it, then I don't think I would have chosen the computers at all."***

While Brenda's dissatisfaction with the outcome of her computing course inevitably colours her view of her earlier decision, the fact remains that the unequal provision of childcare meant that her choice was constrained by this practical factor.

After finishing the computer course, Brenda applied for a variety of computing, office and shop work. Apart from the specific difficulties already noted in finding computing work, she also felt that many employers were unwilling to employ her when they heard she has three children although she had made childcare arrangements with her family:

> ***"But most of the interviews I went for, when I say three kids, it's 'what would you do with them during the summer holidays?'. It didn't matter if you stood on a stack of Bibles and says your childcare's taken care of, there was no way you were going to get employed."***

Eventually Brenda found work in a local shop, later being promoted to assistant manageress. Her employer was flexible in negotiating her hours to fit in better with her children. When interviewed, she had just recently started a new job as a receptionist in a medical practice. This is better paid and since she works in the early evening does not require childcare. While she recognises that the modules she gained on the computing course helped her to get the job, nevertheless she is dissatisfied and restless:

> ***"It's a better job and better money but I'm still not programming... fair enough, it's been the modules that got me the job I'm in just now but I still feel I could do more;... this is only my second month in this job so this was quite fresh and exciting for me until I found it wasn't as stimulating as I thought. It's such a waste... that's what I came down to say, I open the Herald and Post, the Evening News and see all these courses, I'm still looking at them, I definitely want to go further."***

Brenda is now seriously thinking of applying for a childcare course:

> ***"I could go back to college for childcare and still keep my job as a sort of safeguard, I don't start my work till quarter to four and it's just across the road."***

Although Brenda's plans have not worked out as she hoped, she is very positive about the WOW course and how it helped her self-image.

> ***"It was great, I grasped everything, I used to go home and couldn't stop talking about it... they were there to help you, everything was there for you... it was like coming out of the closet after being a mother."***

Alison

- **in a full-time job one year after WOW**
- **interviewed once, a year after WOW**

Alison was fairly low key about the value of her WOW course although she said:

> ***"It was alright for me, especially at the time."***

The WOW course had been useful in fulfilling certain needs Alison had had at that time. Having been unemployed after finishing a full-time course, Alison said she had been lonely, had needed something to do to keep busy and more specifically had wanted information and help in terms of job seeking:

> ***"I thought if I could get information and how to fill in CVs, these are two areas I need to know. I did a CV on the course, that was very useful and I got information and addresses... It was the right decision for me psychologically otherwise I'd have been very lonely."***

Nevertheless Alison felt that another course would have provided similar things for her, as she said:

> ***"It could have been any course."***

Alison had been on one of the WOW courses for Women With Disabilities but she did not feel that she had gained anything by going on this rather than one of the area based WOW courses.

Alison was critical of the extent of support provided by WOW after her course had finished. She felt that the arrangement that was in place then, that is a part-time careers officer attached to the City-wide WOW office, was inadequate since she had experienced a long delay in getting an appointment.

A suggestion Alison made was that WOW should consider the possibility of some students going on an educational rather than a work placement, that some women should be able to go to college for this time if this is more relevant to their plans.

Alison was working full-time co-ordinating an employment training programme when interviewed and she felt that she would have got this job whether or not she had taken the WOW course. Although helpful in some ways, the WOW course had not made a large impact on Alison's prospects and plans.

Jean

- at home looking after her family two years after WOW
- interviewed once, two years after WOW

When Jean saw a newspaper advertisement for WOW she was in an unsettled frame of mind. Several years before she had gone back to work part-time when she felt her son was old enough (11 years) and had been taking National Certificate modules to acquire some typing qualifications. She and her husband had been trying to have another child but this looked unlikely and, as she said, she had got her "mind set on getting back to work properly". She did, however, become pregnant and so gave up work again. By the time her second child was a toddler, Jean had started looking again to see what was available.

Jean spoke to the WOW Course Co-ordinator before starting WOW but she said:

> ***"I wasn't sure what it would be like, what would come of it and what I'd do at the end of it but I thought 'what the heck, I've nothing to lose'."***

Although she had enjoyed her course, Jean did not think she had gained much from it:

> ***"I didn't come out of it thinking it was a great course. I wasn't impressed tho' I enjoyed it... it was nice to have something for yourself and get paid for it. I felt more of a person and not just a thing that washes dishes..."***

Jean felt that WOW had neither helped her make plans nor equip her with the job-seeking skills she had wanted to learn:

> ***"We didn't do much on letter writing, application forms and didn't have enough time to do interview practice. We did lot of enjoyable things like going to the art gallery but we weren't learning from it. We also spent a lot of time on looking at ourselves, I think this was meant to be confidence building but it didn't work for me."***

She found her two work placements useful in giving her an insight into the two areas of work she had been thinking about and whether they were for her or not. For example, one of her placements had been in a library and she had not realised that staff in public libraries tend to be moved around – this would not suit her.

At her interview Jean was in an ambivalent frame of mind:

> ***"Half of me wants to get back to work but it's so difficult, it's easier to stay at home, I don't want to use a childminder."***

She feels her two children limit her possibilities of both work and education:

> ***"I still have to take the older one to school so I can't start a course at 9. It would help if courses just started a bit later. It's so difficult if you don't have family to help."***

Her younger child will start school soon and she hopes then to find a job or perhaps first do an Office Skills course to update her skills. Even so, any course or job would have to "fit around the kids". Also Jean felt that her husband is not particularly supportive:

"If it fits in OK but not otherwise."

Her husband had recently started to work shifts which has added another difficulty:

"He's now saying just work every second week because of his shifts."

On the one hand, Jean feels there is too much pressure on women nowadays to do something else:

"You can't just sit at home and look after the kids."

But on the other, she is not satisfied with her position:

"I'm not going to be chained to the sink all the time. I'm quite content most of the time but I think 'there's more than this'."

In Jean's estimation, she did not gain much from her WOW course although her placements did help to clarify her job ideas and she felt more of an individual.

Appendix 2

Questionnaires

B2: Questionnaire sent to students one year after WOW

WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS FROM FROM THE WOMEN AND WORK COURSES 1992

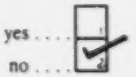
B2

How to answer

These questions are about the things you have been doing over the past year or so. We'd like to find out about your experiences and to hear your views.

For a few questions we ask you to write in your answer, but for most of them there is a list of possible answers with a box printed beside each one. Please choose your answer and put a tick in the box beside it.

For example, if the answers to a question are 'yes' or 'no' and you want to say 'no' tick the box like this:



If none of the answers exactly fits what you want to say, choose the answer that comes nearest.

Thank you for your help in answering these questions. We hope they let you express your own views. If you would like to tell us more in your own words, please write on the inside of the back cover.

Please return this questionnaire using the stamped addressed envelope we gave you.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What are you doing now?

1. **What are you doing now?**
tick all that apply

- in a full-time paid job (30 hrs or more a week) ☐
- in a part-time paid job ☐
- self-employed ☐
- in full-time education or training ☐
- in part-time education or training ☐
- on a government scheme (eg ET) ☐
- looking after your family or home ☐
- unable to work because of illness or disability ☐
- unemployed and looking for work ☐
- doing something else ☐
- *(please say what)* .....

2. **Which of these is your *main* activity?**
***Please underline** it on the list above*

3. **What have you been doing over the past few months?**
*Please tell us what your **main** activity was at each of the following times. Tick one box for each date.*

	June 1992	Sept 1992	Dec 1992
in a full-time paid job	1	1	1
in a part-time paid job	2	2	2
self-employed	3	3	3
in full-time education or training	4	4	4
in part-time education or training	5	5	5
on a government scheme (eg ET)	6	6	6
looking after your family or home	7	7	7
unable to work because of illness or disability	8	8	8
unemployed and looking for work	9	9	9
doing something else	10	10	10

1. **Have you *applied* for any full-time or part-time courses during or after your WOW course?**
tick one box

YES ☐ 1 ↓

NO ☐ 2 → *if NO, please go to question 4 below*

2. **Which types of full-time or part-time courses have you applied for?**
tick all the courses you applied for

	1992	1993
SCOTVEC National Certificate modules at college	☐	☐
other courses at college (eg Highers, Access Course)	☐	☐
advanced courses at college or university (eg HNC/D, teaching diploma, degree)	☐	☐
courses at school	☐	☐
some other education or training	☐	☐

3. **Do you think you will apply for any courses in the next 12 months?**
tick one box

yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2
not sure ☐ 3

4. **Have you ever *started* any full-time or part-time course at a school, college, university, or training centre, *since finishing your WOW course*?**
include courses you took while on ET or in a job
tick one box

YES ☐ 1 ↓

NO ☐ 2 → *if NO, please go to page 4*

5. **Please tell us about your present (or most recent) course. If you are doing more than one, tell us about the *main* one.**

name of the course or main subject studied .....
eg Nursing, Computing .....

qualification, if any, studied for .....
eg National Certificate, Highers, HNC/D .....
if none, write 'none' .....

name of school, college, university or training centre .....
eg Telford College, Edinburgh Women's Training Centre .....

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1. **When did you start this course?** month: ..... year: 19.....

2. **How long does (or did) this course last?** .....yrs.....mths.....wks
if not known, write 'don't know'

3. **Are you still on this course?**
tick one box
yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2

4. **Is (or was) your present or most recent course...** *tick one box*

...full-time? ☐ 1
...sandwich? ☐ 2
...block release? ☐ 3
...day release? ☐ 4
...evening classes? ☐ 5
...a 12 or 21 hour course? ☐ 6
...other part-time ☐ 7

5. **What financial help, if any, did you get towards this course?** *tick all that apply*

training allowance for ET or employer ☐
wages paid by employer ☐
bursary or grant from the Region/Council ☐
grant from Scottish Education Department ☐
grant from your employer or sponsor ☐
fees paid direct by employer or sponsor ☐
'top-up' student loan ☐
financial help from relatives ☐
bank loan or overdraft ☐
other financial help ☐
no financial help ☐

6. **Which qualifications, if any, have you obtained *since* you left your WOW course?**
tick all that apply

no qualifications ☐
SCOTVEC National Certificate modules ☐
SCOTVEC Higher National Units (HNU) ☐
Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) ☐
City & Guilds (CGLI) ☐
SCE O grade or Standard Grade ☐
SCE Higher ☐
RSA ☐
other qualification(s) ☐
(please say which) .....

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1. **Have you had a paid job since your WOW course?**
don't count ET here
tick one box

YES ☐ 1 ↓ NO ☐ 2 → *if NO, please go to page 6*

2. **How many paid jobs (full-time or part-time) have you had since finishing your WOW course?**
don't count ET here

.....jobs

3. **Are you doing any paid work *now*?**
count any full-time or part-time job, and work on training schemes, or self-employment
if you have more than one job, answer for your main job
tick one box

YES ☐ 1 ↓ NO ☐ 2 → *if NO, please go to page 6*

4. **In what sort of business do you work now?**
(eg shop, local government)
.....
.....

What is the name of your present job or scheme?
(eg nurse, cashier)
.....
.....

Describe the actual work you do in your present job or scheme
.....
.....

5. **Is this a temporary job, a permanent job or a scheme?**
tick one box

temporary job .... ☐ 1
permanent job .... ☐ 2
scheme ..... ☐ 3

6. **When did you start your present job or scheme?**

month: .....
year: 19 .....

7. **How many hours did you work last week in this job or scheme, not counting lunch breaks?**
if none, write '0'

.....hours

8. **Last week, what was your pay from this job or scheme?**
***before deductions** of tax, etc*
please work out amount for 1 week

£.....:.....p
give amount for week

1. **In this job, are you self-employed?**
tick one box

yes ..... ☐ 1
no ..... ☐ 2

2. **In this job, do you work from home?**
tick one box

yes ..... ☐ 1
no ..... ☐ 2

3. **How did you find out about this job or scheme?** *tick all that apply*

through family ..... ☐
through friends ..... ☐
through the Jobcentre ..... ☐
through a work placement while on your WOW course ..... ☐
through an advertisement ..... ☐
through direct contact with an employer ..... ☐
through your ET sponsor or managing agent ..... ☐
through a private employment agency ..... ☐
some other way ..... ☐

4. **Do you (or did you) get any training or instruction in this job or scheme, either at work or somewhere else?** *tick one box*

YES ☐ 1 ↓ NO ☐ 2 → *if NO, please go to the next page*

5. **What sort of training do (or did) you get?** *tick all that apply*

courses run by your employer ..... ☐
courses run at an outside training centre ..... ☐
courses run at college ..... ☐
apprenticeship training ..... ☐
training from your supervisor or training officer ..... ☐
training from workmates ..... ☐
other training ..... ☐

6. **Which of these was your *main* training?** *please underline it on the list above*

7. **Does any of your training lead to (or has already led to) a formal qualification?**
tick one box

yes ..... ☐ 1
no ..... ☐ 2

8. **If YES, please say which qualification** .....

9. **Altogether, how many days or weeks of training have you received in the last 12 months**

.....wks.....days

1. **Over the past year, has what you learned on your WOW course been useful to you?** *tick one box*
   - a lot 1
   - a bit 2
   - not at all 3
   - not sure 4

2. **If your WOW course has been useful, in what way(s) has it helped you?**

3. **Which parts of your WOW course have been useful to you?** *tick one box for each line*

	very useful	somewhat useful	not at all useful	not sure
work experience or job placement	1	2	3	4
assertiveness training	1	2	3	4
interview practice	1	2	3	4
learning how to apply for jobs	1	2	3	4
information about different courses	1	2	3	4
information about different job opportunities	1	2	3	4
careers advice	1	2	3	4
decision making	1	2	3	4

4. **Were there any other parts of the course that you have found useful?** *please say what*

5. **Have you been able to carry out any plans you made at the end of your course?** *tick one box*
   - yes 1
   - no 2

6. *if NO:* **Why have you not been able to carry them out?**

7. **Thinking ahead, what are your plans for the next few years?**

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1. **Are you...** *tick all that apply*
   - ...single? ..... ☐
   - ...married? ..... ☐
   - ...living with a partner? ..... ☐
   - ...separated, divorced or widowed? .... ☐

2. **What age group are you in?** *tick one box*
   - 16-24 1
   - 25-34 2
   - 35-44 3
   - 45-54 4
   - 55 and over 5

3. **Do you receive Income Support, Family Credit or any other state benefits or allowances** *(do not count Child Benefit)* *tick one box*
   - yes 1
   - no 2

4. **Have you any children under 16 living at home?** *tick one box*
   - YES ☐ ↓
   - NO ☐ → *if NO, please go to the next page*

5. **Do you need any childcare provision to allow you to work or attend any education or training?** *tick one box*
   - yes 1
   - no 2

6. *if YES:* **Do you need...** *tick one box*
   - ...all day care? 1
   - ...after-school care? 2
   - ...both? 3

7. **Have you been able to find childcare provision?** *tick one box*
   - yes 1
   - no 2

8. *if YES:* **Do you use...** *tick all that apply*
   - ...a childminder? ☐
   - ...a relative? ☐
   - ...a creche or nursery at school, college or training centre? ☐
   - ...a private nursery or after-school club? ☐
   - ...a local authority or community nursery or after-school club? ☐

9. **Are you satisfied with this childcare provision?** *tick one box*
   - yes 1
   - no 2

10. **If you have not been able to find childcare provision does this prevent you from working or studying?** *tick one box*
    - yes 1
    - no 2

Education and employment history

1. **Before your WOW course, did you ever have a paid job?**
   tick one box

   YES ☐1 NO ☐2 → *if NO, please go to question 5 below*

2. **Was this job full-time or part-time?**

   full-time ..... ☐1
   part-time ..... ☐2

3. **When did this job end?** 19___

4. **What was the name of this job?**
   (eg nurse, cook)

   .....

   .....

   What sort of business was it in?
   (eg shop, hotel)

   .....

   .....

5. **Apart from WOW, have you been on any course or government schemes in the last 6 years?**

   yes ..... ☐1
   no ..... ☐2

6. *if YES:* **please say which one(s)**

   .....

   .....

7. **Before your WOW course, altogether, what qualifications, if any, did you have?**

   .....

   .....

   .....

   .....

Thank you very much for filling in this questionnaire

In a year or so, we may wish to contact you again to see how you are getting on. We hope you'll help us again then. Please could you answer the questions here?

1. **Are your name and address correct on the label of this questionnaire?**
   tick one box

   yes ..... ☐1
   no ..... ☐2

   if NO: please write in the correct details here

   .....
   .....
   .....
   ..... Postcode: .....
   Tel No: .....

2. **Please write in the name and address of a person (a relative or friend) who lives at a *different* address from you, who will always know where to get in touch with you.**

   .....
   .....
   .....
   ..... Postcode: .....
   Tel No: .....

3. **Please write in the date you filled in this questionnaire.**

   ...../...../19.....
   day month year

Would you like to tell us more about yourself, in your own words?

What have you been doing over the past year? Has your life changed at all?

Please write more on the back of this page

• 1993 Centre for Educational Sociology

A3: Questionnaire sent to students two years after WOW

WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?

**QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS FROM
FROM THE WOMEN AND WORK
COURSES
1990 and 1991**

A3

How to answer

These questions are about the things you have been doing over the past couple of years since your WOW course. We'd like to find out about your experiences and to hear your views.

For most of the questions there is a list of possible answers with a box printed beside each one. Please choose your answer and put a tick in the box beside it.

For example, if the answers to a question are 'yes' or 'no' and you want to say 'no' tick the box like this:

yes 1
no . . . . ✓ 2

If none of the answers exactly fits what you want to say, choose the answer that comes nearest. For a few questions we ask you to write in your answer.

Thank you for your help in answering these questions. We hope they let you express your own views. If you would like to tell us more in your own words, please write on the inside of the back cover.

Please return this questionnaire using the stamped addressed envelope we gave you.

What are you doing now?

1. **What are you doing now?**
tick all that apply

in a full-time paid job (30 hrs or more a week)	
in a part-time paid job	
self-employed	
in full-time education or training	
in part-time education or training	
on a government scheme (eg ET)	
looking after your family or home	
unable to work because of illness or disability	
unemployed and looking for work	
doing something else	
(please say what)	

2. **Which of these is your *main* activity?**
Please underline it on the list above

3. **What have you been doing over the past few months?**
Please tell us what your main activity was at each of the following times. Tick one box for each date.

	June 1992	Sept 1992	Dec 1992
in a full-time paid job	1	1	1
in a part-time paid job	2	2	2
self-employed	3	3	3
in full-time education or training	4	4	4
in part-time education or training	5	5	5
on a government scheme (eg ET)	6	6	6
looking after your family or home	7	7	7
unable to work because of illness or disability	8	8	8
unemployed and looking for work	9	9	9
doing something else	10	10	10

1. **Since finishing your WOW course, have you ever *started* any full-time or part-time course at a school, college, university or training centre?**
include courses you took while on ET or in a job
tick one box

YES ☐ 1 NO ☐ 2 → *if NO, please go to page 4*

↓

2. **Please tell us about your present (or most recent) course. If you are doing more than one, tell us about the *main* one.**

name of the course or main subject studied .....
eg Nursing, Computing .....

qualification, if any, studied for .....
eg National Certificate, Highers, HNC/D .....
if none, write 'none' .....

name of school, college, university or training centre .....
eg Telford College, Edinburgh Women's Training Centre .....

3. **Is (or was) your present or most recent course...**
tick one box

...full-time?	1
...sandwich?	2
...block release?	3
...day release?	4
...evening classes?	5
...a 12 or 21 hour course?	6
...other part-time?	7

4. **When did you start this course?** month: ..... year: 19.....

5. **How long does (or did) this course last?** .....yrs.....mths.....wks
if not known, write 'don't know'

6. **Are you still on this course?** yes ☐ 1 no ☐ 2
tick one box

7. **Why did you take this course?**

.....

.....

1. **What financial help, if any, did you get towards this course?** *tick all that apply*

training allowance for ET or employer		'top-up' student loan	
wages paid by employer		financial help from relatives	
bursary or grant from the Region/Council		bank loan or overdraft	
grant from Scottish Education Department		other financial help	
grant from your employer or sponsor		no financial help	
fees paid direct by employer or sponsor			

2. **Have you (or did you) experience any practical difficulties during this course?**
tick one box

YES ☐ 1 NO ☐ 2 → *if NO, please go to question 6 below*

↓

if YES: **Is (or was) this because of....** *tick all that apply*

...childcare problems		...finance	
...health problems		...transport problems	
...attitude of family or partner		...another reason	
...unsuitable hours		*(please say what)*	

3. **Did you get any help with any of these difficulties?** yes ☐ 1 no ☐ 2
(eg from college or training centre, family or friends, or employer)
tick one box

4. *if YES:* **What help did you get?**

.....

.....

5. *if NO:* **What help would you have liked?**

.....

.....

6. **Which qualifications, if any, have you obtained *since* you left your WOW course?**
tick all that apply

no qualifications		SCE O grade or Standard Grade	
SCOTVEC National Certificate modules		SCE Higher	
SCOTVEC Higher National Units (HNU)		RSA	
Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ)		other qualification(s)	
City & Guilds (CGLI)		*(please say which)*	

1. **Have you had a paid job since your WOW course?**
don't count ET here
tick one box

YES ☐ 1 NO ☐ 2 → *if NO, please go to page 6*

2. **How many paid jobs (full-time or part-time) have you had since finishing your WOW course?**
don't count ET here

.....jobs

3. **Have you experienced any difficulties in going out to work?** yes ☐ 1 / no ☐ 2

if YES: **Is (or was) this because of....**
tick all that apply

...childcare problems	☐	...attitude of family or partner	☐
...unsuitable hours of work	☐	...transport problems	☐
...health problems	☐	...another reason	☐

(please say what) .....

4. **What might help you deal with these difficulties?**

.....

.....

5. **Are you doing any paid work *now*?**
count any full-time or part-time job, and work on training schemes, or self-employment
if you have more than one job, answer for your main job
tick one box

YES ☐ 1 NO ☐ 2 → *if NO, please go to page 6*

6. **In what sort of business do you work now?**
(eg shop, local government) .....

What is the name of your present job or scheme?
(eg nurse, cashier) .....

Describe the actual work you do in your present job or scheme .....

7. **Is this a temporary job, a permanent job or a scheme?** temporary job .... ☐ 1 / permanent job .... ☐ 2 / scheme ..... ☐ 3
tick one box

1. **When did you start your present job or scheme?** month: ..... year: 19 .....

2. **How many hours did you work last week in this job or scheme, not counting lunch breaks?** .....hours
if none, write '0'

3. **Last week, what was your pay from this job or scheme?** £.....:.....p
***before deductions** of tax, etc* *give amount for week*
please work out amount for 1 week

4. **In this job, are you self-employed?** yes ☐ 1 / no ☐ 2
tick one box

5. **How did you find out about this job or scheme?** *tick all that apply*

through family	☐	through direct contact with an employer	☐
through friends	☐	through your ET sponsor or managing agent	☐
through the Jobcentre	☐	through a private employment agency	☐
through a work placement while on WOW	☐	some other way	☐
through an advertisement	☐		

6. **Do you (or did you) get any training or instruction in this job or scheme, either at work or somewhere else?** *tick one box*

YES ☐ 1 NO ☐ 2 → *if NO, please go to the next page*

7. **What sort of training do (or did) you get?** *tick all that apply*

courses run by your employer	☐	training from your supervisor or training officer	☐
courses run at an outside training centre	☐	training from workmates	☐
courses run at college	☐	other training	☐
apprenticeship training	☐		

8. **Which of these was your *main* training?** *please underline it on the list above*

9. **Does any of your training lead to a formal qualification?** yes ☐ 1 / no ☐ 2
tick one box

10. *if YES:* **Please say which qualification** .....

11. **Altogether, how many days or weeks of training have you received in the last 12 months**
.....wks.....days

1. **Since your WOW course have you tried to...**
tick all that apply

...do some training or further study? ☐
...do voluntary work? ☐
...find a paid job? ☐
...none of these? ☐

if NONE OF THESE: Please go to the next page

2. **What difficulties (if any) have you had in carrying out any of these plans?**
tick all that apply

no particular difficulties ☐
lack of qualifications/training ☐
attitude of family or partner ☐
domestic responsibilities ☐
health problems ☐
finance ☐
unsuitable hours ☐
other ☐
(please say what) .....

3. **Which of these has been your *main* difficulty?** *please underline it on the list above*

4. **Have any of these difficulties meant you've had to give up or change your plans?**

tick one box

yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2

Please explain

.....

.....

5. **Has there been anyone or anything which has helped you carry out your plans?**

tick one box

yes ☐ 1
no ☐ 2

Please explain

.....

.....

1. **What plans (if any) do you have for the next few years?**

.....

.....

2. **What might improve your chances of carrying out these plans?**

.....

.....

3. **Looking back, has what you learned on your WOW course been useful to you?**
tick one box

a lot ☐ 1
a bit ☐ 2
not at all ☐ 3
not sure ☐ 4

4. **If your WOW course has been useful, in what way(s) has it helped you?**

.....

.....

5. **Which parts of your WOW course have been useful to you?**
tick one box for each line

	very useful	somewhat useful	not at all useful	not sure
work experience or job placement	1	2	3	4
assertiveness training	1	2	3	4
interview practice	1	2	3	4
learning how to apply for jobs	1	2	3	4
information about different courses	1	2	3	4
information about different job opportunities	1	2	3	4
careers advice	1	2	3	4
decision making	1	2	3	4

6. **From your experience, is there anything else that should be included in a WOW course?**

.....

.....

About yourself

1. **Are you...** *tick all that apply*

...single? ☐ ...living with a partner? ☐

...married? ☐ ...separated, divorced or widowed? ☐

2. **Do you receive Income Support, Family Credit or any other state benefits or allowances**

(do not count Child Benefit) yes ☐ 1

tick one box no ☐ 2

3. **Have you any children under 16 living at home?** *tick one box*

YES ☐ 1 ↓ NO ☐ 2 → *if NO, please go to the next page*

4. **Do you need any childcare provision to allow you to work or attend any education or training?** *tick one box*

yes ☐ 1

no ☐ 2

5. *if YES:* **Do you need...** *tick one box*

...all day care? ☐ 1

...after-school care? ☐ 2

...both? ☐ 3

6. **Have you been able to find childcare provision?** *tick one box*

yes ☐ 1

no ☐ 2

7. *if YES:* **Do you use...** *tick all that apply*

...a childminder? ☐

...a relative? ☐

...a creche or nursery at school, college or training centre? ☐

...a private nursery or after-school club? ☐

...a local authority or community nursery or after-school club? ☐

8. **Are you satisfied with this childcare provision?** *tick one box*

yes ☐ 1

no ☐ 2

Thank you very much for filling in this questionnaire

We may wish to contact you again to see how you are getting on. We hope you'll help us again then. Please could you answer the questions here?

1. **Are your name and address correct on the label of this questionnaire?** *tick one box*

yes ☐ 1

no ☐ 2

if NO: please write in the correct details here

.....

.....

.....

..... Postcode: .....

Tel No: .....

2. **Please write in the name and address of a person (a relative or friend) who lives at a *different* address from you, who will always know where to get in touch with you.**

.....

.....

.....

..... Postcode: .....

Tel No: .....

3. **Please write in the date you filled in this questionnaire.**

...../...../19.....

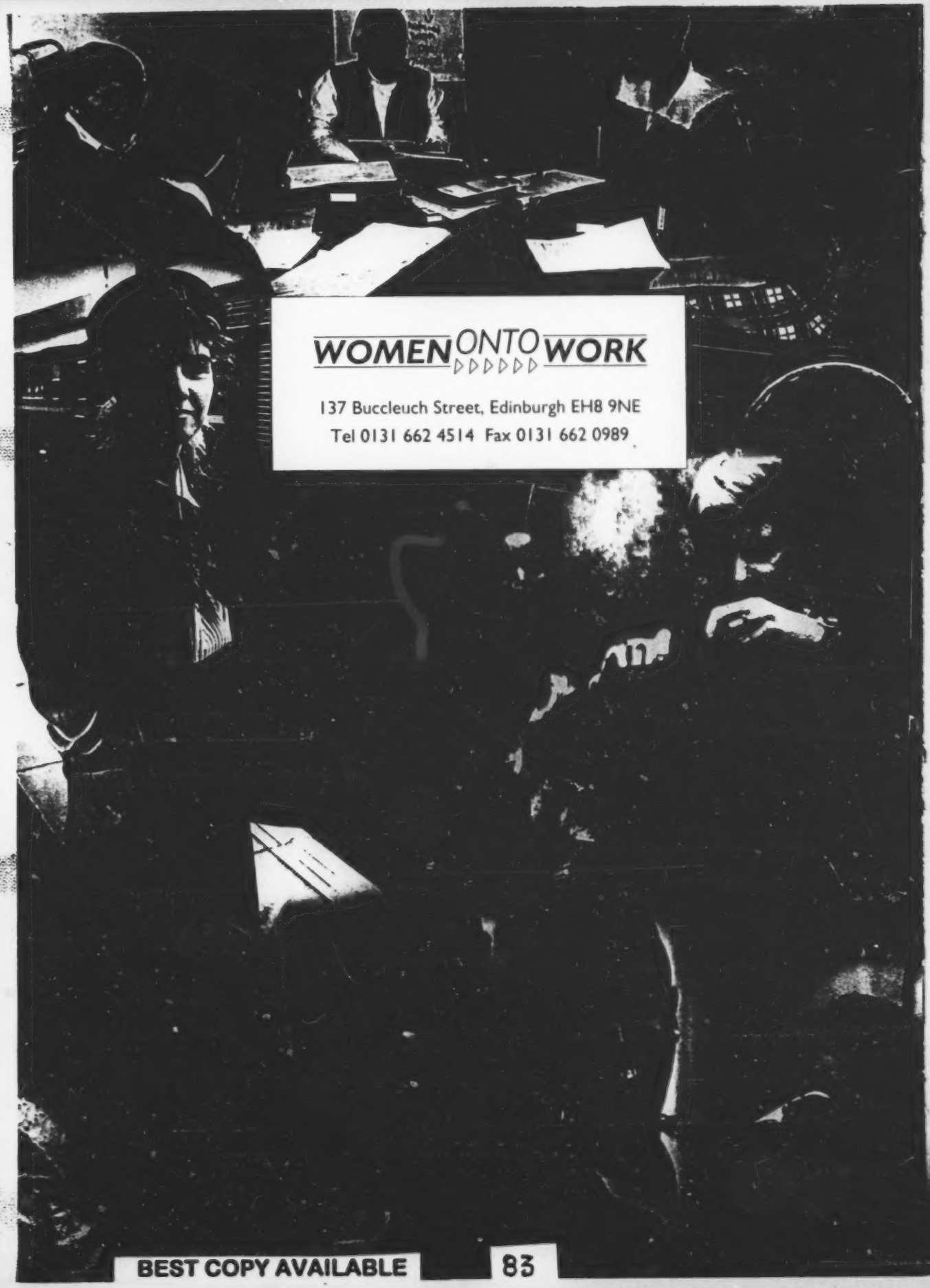
day month year

Would you like to tell us more about yourself?

What have you been doing over the last two years? Has your life changed at all? Did your WOW course make a difference to how you thought about yourself and your future?

Please write more on the back of this page

• 1993 Centre for Educational Sociology



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